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EDITED BY KATELIJN VANDORPE



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Cornelia Römer studied Classics at the Universities of Cologne and Florence. She was Head of the Papyrus Collection at the University of Cologne until 2000, when she became Professor of Papyrology at UCL. From 2005, she was Director of the Papyrus Collection and Papyrus Museum in Vienna. She is now a long-term lecturer at the German Academic Exchange Service at Ain Shams University, as well as a freelance collaborator at the German Archaeological Institute in Cairo. The main areas of her research are Greek literary and documentary papyrology and the archaeology of Greco-Roman Egypt.

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Katelijan Vandompe is Professor of Papyrology and Ancient History at the KU Leuven University, Belgium, and a member of the Royal Flemish Academy of Belgium. Her main research field is Greco-Roman Egypt, and her publications include text editions (P. Dryton and, with S.P. Vleeming, P. Erbstreit), archival research, studies on seals, onomastics, institutions, and socioeconomic aspects of this multicultural society.

Peter van Minnen is Professor of Classics at the University of Cincinnati. He specializes in documentary papyrology and the social and economic history of Greco-Roman Egypt. The author of numerous publications, recipient of several awards, and editor of *BASP*, he is currently working on an edition of a family archive from Hermopolis and a guide to Alexandria in the age of Augustus.

Anne-Emmanuelle Veïsse is Assistant Professor in Greek History at the University of Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne. She is the author of *Les "révoltes égyptiennes." Recherches sur les troubles intérieurs en Égypte du règne de Ptolémée III à la conquête romaine* (2004) and co-editor of two collective books. Her research focuses on the political and social history of Ptolemaic Egypt.

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Marja Vierros is a postdoctoral scholar in the project Act of the Scribe. Transmitting Linguistic Knowledge and Scribal Practices in Greco-Roman Antiquity (Academy of Finland, University of Helsinki). She is the author of *Bilingual Notaries in Hellenistic Egypt. A Study of Greek as a Second Language* (2012). Her areas of expertise are Greek papyrology, historical (socio)linguistics, and linguistic annotation (dependency treebanks).

Sitta von Reden is Professor of Ancient History at the University of Freiburg, Germany. She has published widely on both Hellenistic Egypt and the ancient monetary economy. Her monographs include *Money in Ptolemaic Egypt* (2007), *Money in Classical Antiquity* (2010), and *Die antike Wirtschaft* (2015).

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Three younger colleagues of the University of Leuven research group of Ancient History have collaborated on this volume: **Gwen Jennes** graduated in Egyptology (with a minor in Archaeology) at the KU Leuven University, where she also obtained her PhD; her research focuses mainly on the relation between personal names and reli-

gion in Late Period, Greco-Roman, and Late Antique Egypt. **Valérie Wyns** graduated in Ancient History, and is currently a PhD student studying the impact of Ptolemaic government on the quality of life. **Nico Dogaer** graduated in Ancient History, and is currently a PhD student researching the Ptolemaic system of monopolies.

Preface

When as a student I was introduced to the field of Greco-Roman Egypt, I was fortunate to rely on a rarely used introduction, the Dutch *Papyrologisch Handboek* by Willy Peremans and Jozef Vergote (1942), which already fully included Egyptian (Demotic and Coptic) material and also focused on broader issues such as Administration and Religion, even though it was no longer up to date in all areas. Already at that time, I silently cherished the ambition to present such a manual to an international audience.

When, a few years ago, I was offered the chance to edit *A Companion to Greco-Roman and Late Antique Egypt*, I had some doubts. The situation had completely changed. While more publications than ever were appearing in the field and some guidance was undoubtedly needed, several excellent companions were already available – companions in which I had taken part and which, as I am writing this introduction, are piled up on the table in front of me. What more could I offer? Should I accept this invitation? Over the course of this project, my answer has changed from a cautious to a full-blown “yes.” I have tried to compose a companion that still provides basic information for students and, I hope, their professors, but at the same time is sufficiently different from the handbooks already in existence.

Egypt: from Alexander to the Copts. An Archaeological and Historical Guide (2004), edited by Roger S. Bagnall and Dominic W. Rathbone, was the first handbook with a strong archeological focus, of which a revised electronic edition is now available. The *Oxford Handbook of Papyrology* (2009b), edited by Roger S. Bagnall, obviously emphasizes the papyrological source material (including ostraca and wooden tablets) and focuses on the Greek and Latin sources, although several chapters also deal with Egyptian, Aramaic, Persian, and Arabic documentation and with broader issues such as Law, Religion, and Science. The *Blackwell Companion to Ancient Egypt* (2010), edited by Alan B. Lloyd, is a two-volume handbook with a pharaonic and Greco-Roman component to all its themes, the stated aim of which is to “recognize differences but also emphasize the continuities of Pharaonic Egyptian civilization” thus providing “valuable perspectives and data both to Egyptologists and Graeco-Roman specialists” (p. xxi). The major themes that are addressed include State and Economic Structures, Social Order, Language and Literature, Visual Arts, and Reception Studies. *The Oxford Handbook of Roman Egypt*

(2012), edited by Christina Riggs, aims to exceed the disciplinary boundaries for that specific period. Within the major themes (Land and State; City, Town, and *Chora*; People, Religion, Texts, and Language; Images and Objects; and Borders, Trade, and Tourism), the editor presents chapters written by authors with a variety of disciplinary profiles. The archeological component is explicitly present in several parts.

It was a big challenge to present a new thematic perspective. Apart from the case of *Egypt: from Alexander to the Copts*, our chronological scope is of course different from that of other comparable works. Here, we cover almost 1000 years of Egyptian history, starting with its liberation from Persian rule by Alexander the Great in 332 BC and ending in AD 642, when Arab rule began.

We have further pursued the following objectives. In the first place, we wanted to offer a comprehensive overview, which is the main objective of a companion. For this, we have chosen a largely sociological approach: the “Life Portraits” at the end of each part, the theme of “Identity in a Multicultural Environment,” and Chapter 35 on the quality of life of Egypt’s inhabitants are clear examples of this aim. Furthermore, we wanted to emphasize the changes that occurred in the Greco-Roman and Late Antique Periods, as illustrated in thematic titles such as “Governing a Country with a Past: Between Tradition and Innovation,” “Traditional Religious Life Challenged,” and “Creative Minds in Theory and Praxis.”

Also in this volume we have sought to exceed disciplinary boundaries, especially those between Greek papyrology on the one hand and Demotic and Coptic studies on the other; we hope that we have realized this in a reasonably systematic manner, which is new for this type of handbook. Thus, we opted against presenting separate chapters on, for example, Greek literature, Latin literature, Egyptian Demotic literature, and so on, or on Egyptian or Greek sciences, as these are already available in other handbooks. Here, rather, we have brought together specialists who discuss the multilingual sources on, for example, literature, in one chapter jointly presented. For this, we have put together authors from different backgrounds in a variety of chapters: Greek papyrologists and demotists/Egyptologists (Chapters 21, 31, and 32); historians and archeologists (Chapter 2); scholars of the Ptolemaic, Roman, and/or Late Antique Periods (Chapters 11, 12, and 18); and other specialisms (Chapter 24). Except in our Chapters 2, 15, and 33, the archeological component here is less clearly present than in *Egypt: from Alexander to the Copts* or in the *Oxford Handbook of Roman Egypt*, which provide detailed data according to region. Finally, we have not included chapters on the reception of Greco-Roman Egypt, which is widely discussed in the *Blackwell Companion to Ancient Egypt* (Part VII), but have chosen to emphasize the possible impact of the study of Greco-Roman Egypt on other fields of research, such as Hellenistic and Roman History more generally, and New Testament Studies (Chapters 36–38, but see also Chapters 3–6) – an area that does not always receive due attention.

All these ambitious goals are hopefully realized. The main themes are preceded by an introductory section: I. Greco-Roman Egypt Explored, focusing on the sources in their physical context and presenting the research fields in a digital and multidisciplinary context. The following main themes of this volume are: II. Egypt as Part of a Globalizing World, that is the Hellenistic, Roman, and, finally, Byzantine worlds; III. Governing a Country with a Past, focusing on traditions and innovations in the administration, policy

fields, fiscal system, army and police, and private law; IV. Developing the Economic Strength of the Nile Country, presenting chapters on monetization, stimuli for irrigation, agriculture and quarrying, and the economic growth and exploitation of land; V. Identity in a Multicultural Environment, including social, class, and ethnic identity, familial and gender identity, and cultural identity; VI. Traditional Religious Life Challenged, discussing religion in a multicultural context, the ruler and imperial cults, new deities and new cults, and Egypt's role in the rise of Christianity, monasticism, and regional schisms; and VII. Creative Minds in Theory and Praxis, a theme in search of new developments in language and literature, science, architectural practices, urbanism, and the visual arts.

The Epilogue presents chapters on sociologically inspired thoughts concerning the quality of life in Greco-Roman Egypt, the research impact of work on Greco-Roman Egypt on other domains, and a discussion of the future of our studies. The detailed Chronological Outline is complementary to that of the *Blackwell Companion to Ancient Egypt*, which has a strong focus on Pharaonic Egypt. The Bibliography is inevitably preceded by a long list of digital resources, referred to throughout the volume. For the photographs, we have preferred illustrations of less well-known texts, objects, and structures.

We have tried to be innovative by introducing at the end of each theme a chapter on "Life Portraits," which takes advantage of archival material and shows how individuals responded to the various aspects presented in the preceding chapters. These include portraits of both royals and more ordinary people in a globalizing world, of individuals and their everyday papers in a bureaucratic society, of people at work, of people of a multicultural generation, and of people in worship. The Life Portraits have been written by members or former members of the KU Leuven research unit of Ancient History. Some topics are highlighted in "Information Boxes." Among such boxed topics, one can find, for example, "'Wandering' Orators and Poets in Late Antique Egypt," "Textiles and Textile Archeology," and "'I Will Tattoo on Your Head ...': New Ancient Books." More complex or detailed information is made available in a series of tables.

For common personal and place names, we have used the Latinized or English form (the god Horus, Ptolemy, Homer), while non-common names are simply transliterated (an otherwise unknown individual is called Horos or Paniskos). For the titles of the works of classical authors, we have largely relied on the Oxford Classical Dictionary, although we have not abbreviated them in this volume. Egyptian Hieroglyphic/Hieratic, Demotic, and Coptic words are presented in transliteration formats typical of the respective fields of research.

It has really been a pleasure and an honor to cooperate with so many excellent colleagues and scholars. I hope the reader will enjoy reading or consulting this companion.

Katelijnn Vanderpe
Heverlee, May 2017

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Abbreviations

Abbreviations of papyrological and inscriptional sources are too numerous to be listed here.

- For abbreviations of papyrological sources (P., O., etc.), see J. F. Oates, R. S. Bagnall, S. J. Clackson, A. O'Brien, J. D. Sosin, T. G. Wilfong, and K. A. Worp, *Checklist of Greek, Latin, Demotic and Coptic Papyri, Ostraca and Tablets*. ed. 5. Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists, Supplement 9. Oakville and Oxford 2001, regularly updated in the online version: <http://www.papyri.info/docs/checklist>
- For abbreviations of inscriptional sources (I., CIL, etc.), see http://www.antiquite.ens.fr/IMG/file/pdf_guide_epi/abbreviations_guide.pdf
- For abbreviations of both papyrological and inscriptional sources, see additionally <http://www.trismegistos.org/tm/search.php>

AE	<i>L'Année épigraphique</i> , since 1888
ANRW	<i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt. Geschichte und Kultur Roms im Spiegel der neueren Forschung</i> , since 1970
BL	<i>Berichtigungsliste der griechischen Papyrusurkunden aus Ägypten</i> , since 1922
BullÉp	<i>Bulletin épigraphique</i> , in <i>Revue des études grecques</i> , since 1888
DDbDP	<i>The Duke Databank of Documentary Papyri</i> , available via papyri.info
DNP	<i>Der Neue Pauly</i> . Enzyklopädie der Antike. 16 vols. Stuttgart-Weimar 1996–2003
FGrHist	<i>Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker</i> , Parts I–III, edited by Felix Jacoby, Berlin 1923–1930, Leiden 1940–1958; <i>Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker continued</i> , Part IV, edited by Guido Schepens, Leiden 1999–2008, by Stefan Schorn, Leiden since 2009, accessible online at www.brillonline.com
LDAB	Leuven Database of Ancient Books. http://www.trismegistos.org/ldab/
Pros. Ptol.	<i>Prosopographia Ptolemaica</i> , 10 vols. Leuven 1977–2002

SEG	<i>Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum</i> , since 1923
<i>Suppl. Hell</i>	<i>Supplementum Hellenisticum</i> , edited by Hugh Lloyd-Jones and Peter Parsons. Berlin-New York 1983
TM	Trismegistos: an Interdisciplinary Portal of Papyrological and Epigraphical Resources. http://www.trismegistos.org/
TM Arch	TM arch (followed by identification number of the archive). Database and descriptions of Papyrus Archives in Greco-Roman Egypt. http://www.trismegistos.org/arch/index.php
TM Geo	TM geo (followed by identification number of the place name). Database and descriptions of Papyrus Archives in Greco-Roman Egypt. http://www.trismegistos.org/arch/index.php

See also the digital resources at the end of the volume.

Chronological Outline

For a more detailed survey of the Pharaonic Period, the reader should consult the chronological overview in Lloyd's *Companion to Ancient Egypt* (2010). For the Ptolemaic Period, see the detailed "Overview of the events discussed in the history of the Ptolemaic Kingdom" in Hölbl (2001). For the Greco-Roman and Late Antique Period, see the "Chronological outline" by Bagnall and Rathbone (2004). Periods of instability are marked in bold.

Pharaonic Egypt

Early Dynastic Period	c. 3150–2686 BC
Old Kingdom	c. 2686–2160
First Intermediate Period	c. 2160–2055
Middle Kingdom	c. 2055–1650
Second Intermediate Period	c. 1650–1550
New Kingdom	c. 1550–1069
Third Intermediate Period	c. 1069–664
c. 800, Homer calls the Nile country <i>Aigyptos</i>	
Late Period:	664–332
<i>Twenty-sixth Dynasty</i>	664–525
Psammetichus I	
foundation of the Greek city of Naucratis	
Necho II	
rebuilding of Nile–Red Sea canal started (finished by Ptolemy II)	
Psammetichus II	
after 594, Solon of Athens visits Egypt and meets the priests of Sais?	
Apries	
Amasis	
Thales of Miletus studies in Egypt geometric principles	
Pythagoras stays in Egypt for 22 years	
Psammetichus III	

<i>Twenty-seventh Dynasty (first Persian Period)</i>	525–404
Cambyses	
Darius I	
c. 500, Hecataeus of Miletus visits Egypt as far south as Thebes	
Xerxes	
c. 460, Anaxagoras explains the risings of the Nile	
Artaxerxes I	
449–447, Herodotus visits Egypt	
Darius II	
Artaxerxes II	
 <i>Twenty-eighth Dynasty</i>	 404–399
Amyrtaios	
 <i>Twenty-ninth Dynasty</i>	 399–380
Nepherites I	
Psammuthis	
Hakor	
Nepherites II	
 <i>Thirtieth Dynasty</i>	 380–343
Nectanebo I	
Teos	
Nectanebo II	
 <i>Thirty-first Dynasty (second Persian Period)</i>	 343–332
Artaxerxes II	
Arses	
Darius III	

Macedonian Dynasty (332–305 BC)

Alexander the Great	332–323 BC
332, liberation of Egypt from Persian rule by Alexander	
331, Alexander's expedition to the Siwa Oasis, foundation of Alexandria	
Philip Arrhidacus	323–317
323, Settlement of Babylon, Ptolemy son of Lagus becomes satrap of Egypt	
321–320, First War of the Successors	
321, Ptolemy "abducts" Alexander's corpse on its way to Macedonia or Siwa	
320, Settlement of Triparadisus (Northern Syria)	
319–315, Second War of the Successors	

Alexander IV of Macedon, son of Alexander the Great	316–310/09
314–311, Third War of the Successors	
before 311, Alexandria becomes Egypt's new capital	
311, Satrap stele set up by priests of Bouto (Delta)	

Ptolemaic Rulers (305–30 BC)

Ptolemy I Soter	305–282 BC
305/4, Ptolemy assumes kingship	
303–301, Fourth War of the Successors	
c. 300, foundation of the Alexandrian Mouseion and Library	
288–285, Fifth War of the Successors	
285, construction of the Pharos	
reign of Ptolemy I or II, Manetho revises Egyptian history in his <i>Aigyptiaka</i> , dividing Egypt's past into the currently used dynasties	
Ptolemy II Philadelphus	284/2–246
c. 279, Ptolemy marries his sister Arsinoe II	
c. 275, conquest of Lower Nubia, Cyrenaica becomes independent under Magas (until 250)	
274–271, First Syrian War (against Seleucid Empire)	
273, first diplomatic contacts between Alexandria and Rome	
272/1, creation of cult of “brother–sister gods”	
270, death of queen Arsinoe II	
268/7–262/1 Chremonidean War (Ptolemy supports Athenian-Spartan coalition)	
260–253, Second Syrian War	
[Rome: 264–241, First Punic War]	
250, Cyrenaica is reabsorbed by Egypt after Magas' death	
Ptolemy III Euergetes I	246–222/1
246–241, Third Syrian War	
243, decree of Alexandria, first sacerdotal decree by synod of priests meeting in precinct of Alexander's tomb	
238, Canopus decree	
237, construction of the Edfu temple starts	
Ptolemy IV Philopator I	222/1–204
219–217, Fourth Syrian War	
217, Battle of Raphia	
[Rome: 218/7–202/1, Second Punic War]	
Ptolemy V Epiphanes	204–180
206–186, the Great Revolt, construction of the Edfu temple halts	
c. 202–198(/5), Fifth Syrian War	
196, Memphis decree (Rosetta stone)	
193/2, Ptolemy marries Cleopatra I, daughter of Seleucid king Antiochus III	

Ptolemy VI Philometor	180–145
180–177/6, Cleopatra I rules with her son, Ptolemy VI	
Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II	170–163
170–168, Sixth Syrian War	
169 & 168, Antiochus IV invades Egypt	
c. 168–164, coup d'état of Dionysios Petosarapis	
164, clash between Ptolemy VI and VIII; VI flees to Rome and Cyprus	
163–145, Ptolemy VI back in Egypt, Ptolemy VIII reigns over Cyrenaica	
[Rome: 149–146, Third Punic War]	
145, Ptolemy VI campaigns in Syria, is wounded and dies (Ptolemy VII Neos Philopator, never reigned)	
Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II	145–116
145/4, Ptolemy VIII marries his sister, Cleopatra II	
c. 141, Ptolemy VIII also marries his niece, Cleopatra III	
142, inauguration of the Edfu temple; 140, start of the construction of the pronaos	
c. 140, Scipio Aemilianus visits Egypt	
132–124, dynastic rivalry and civil war	
118, general amnesty promulgated by the king and queens	
Cleopatra III	116–101
rules jointly with Ptolemy IX (116–107) and Ptolemy X (107–101)	
Ptolemy IX Soter II	116–107
112, the Roman senator L. Mummius visits Egypt	
Ptolemy X Alexander I	107–88
103–101, Judean-Syrian-Egyptian conflict	
88, dynastic rivalry and revolt in the Thebaid	
Ptolemy IX Soter II (restored)	88–81/0
Ptolemy XI Alexander II	80
Ptolemy XII Neos Dionysos Auletes	80–58
60–59, Diodorus Siculus visits Egypt	
59, Ptolemy becomes “friend and ally of the Roman people”	
Cleopatra VI Tryphaena and Berenice IV Epiphanes	58–55
Ptolemy XII Neos Dionysos (restored)	55–51
55, Ptolemy puts his daughter Berenice IV to death	
Cleopatra VII Philopator	51–30
rules jointly with her brothers (XIII and XIV) and son (XV)	
Ptolemy XIII	51–47
48, Pompey murdered by Ptolemy; his tomb becomes pilgrimage site for emperors	
Ptolemy XIV	47–44
Ptolemy XV Philopator Philometor, alias Caesarion	44–30
47, Nile cruise of Cleopatra and Caesar	
≈47, birth of Ptolemy XV	

- 46, Cleopatra follows Caesar to Rome
 44, assassination of Caesar, Cleopatra travels back to Egypt
 41, Cleopatra meets Antony in Tarsus
 31, sea battle at Actium (Greece), Antony and Cleopatra defeated by Octavian
 30, suicide of Antony and Cleopatra in Alexandria, assassination of Ptolemy XV

Roman Emperors (30 BC–AD 324)

(linked names indicate joint rulers)

Octavian/Augustus	30 BC – AD 14
official name: Imperator Caesar (from 27 BC on: Imperator Caesar Augustus)	
30 BC, Octavian in Alexandria, visits Memphis	
29 BC, Theban revolt, crushed by the first prefect Gallus	
27/6 BC, Gallus commits suicide	
c. 25 BC, Strabo visits Egypt	
Tiberius	14–37
AD 19, Germanicus visits Alexandria without emperor's consent	
Caligula	37–41
38, atrocities against Jews in Alexandria	
Claudius	41–54
Nero	54–68
Galba, Otho, Vitellius	68–69
68, edict of the prefect Ti. Julius Alexander, introducing measures against corruption etc.	
Vespasian	69–79
69, Vespasian proclaimed emperor by the legions in Alexandria, visits the city; his son and general Titus also travels to Memphis	
66–73, failed Judean Revolt , put down by Titus, entails harsh repercussions for Egyptian Jews; “Jewish tax” imposed on Jews throughout the empire	
Titus	79–81
[Italy: 79, eruption of Vesuvius]	
Domitian	81–96
Nerva	96–98
Trajan	98–117
115–117, Jewish Revolt in Cyrenaica and Egypt, crushed under Hadrian	
Hadrian	117–138
130–131, Hadrian visits Egypt, foundation of Antinoopolis	
Antoninus Pius	138–161

Marcus Aurelius	161–180 }
Lucius Verus	161–169 }
167–179, Antonine plague in Egypt	
c. 172, <i>Boukoloi</i> or “cattlemen” terrorize areas of the Delta	
175, Avidius Cassius defeats <i>Boukoloi</i> rebellion, proclaimed emperor; Marcus Aurelius suppresses sedition	
Commodus	180–192
Pertinax	192–193
Didius Julianus	193
Septimius Severus	193–211
Various sources attest to a persecution of Christians under Septimius Severus	
193–194, Pescennius Niger, governor of Syria, proclaimed emperor and for a short time recognized in Egypt	
199/200, emperor visits Egypt	
200/1, the nome capitals become Greek-style <i>poleis</i>	
Caracalla (Antoninus)	211–217 }
Geta	211 }
212, <i>Constitutio Antoniniana</i> , granting all free citizens of the empire Roman citizenship	
215, Caracalla visits Alexandria	
215–216, repression of the Alexandrians, who had rioted during imperial visit	
Macrinus	217–218
Elagabalus	218–222
Alexander Severus	222–235
c. 233, emperor plans visit to Egypt	
Maximinus Thrax	235–238
Gordian I and II	238
Pupienus, Balbinus	238
Gordian III	238–244
Philip the Arab	244–249
Decius	249–251
250, Decian persecution of Christians, <i>libelli</i> in Egypt	
Trebonianus Gallus	251–253
Aemilius Aemilianus	253
Valerian	253–260 }
c. 257–260, Valerian persecution of Christians	
Gallienus	253–268 }
260–261, Macrianus junior and his brother Quietus, usurpers, recognized in Egypt	
Claudius II the Goth	268–270
Quintillus	270
Aurelian	270–275

270–272, Palmyrene occupation of Egypt, with queen Zenobia and her son Vaballathus

c. 270, Antony's withdrawal from inheritance to solitary asceticism at the edge of his village: traditional starting point of monasticism

Tacitus	275–276
Florianus	276
Probus	276–282
Carus	282–283
Numerian	283–284
Carinus	283–285
Diocletian	284–305
284, the Copts take the year Diocletian became emperor as the starting point for their “Era of the Martyrs”	
293, installation of the tetrarchy system with <i>Augusti</i> and <i>Caesares</i>	
296/7, Lucius Domitius Domitianus, usurper, recognized in Egypt	
297/8, Aurelius Achilleus, usurper, recognized in Egypt	
297/8, Diocletian suppresses rebels, visits Middle and Upper Egypt, negotiates treaty in Nubia with Blemmyes and Nobatae	
301, Price edict	
303–313, the Great persecution	
Maximinus	305–313
Severus II	305–307
Maxentius	306–312
Licinius, Augustus of the East	308–324
Constantine I, Caesar and Augustus of the West	306–324
311, execution of Peter, bishop of Alexandria	
313, decree of Licinius or Edict of Milan, granting all persons freedom of religion	
c. 323, foundation of first monastery by Pachomius	
324, Constantine's victory over Licinius	

Byzantine Emperors (AD 324–639/42)

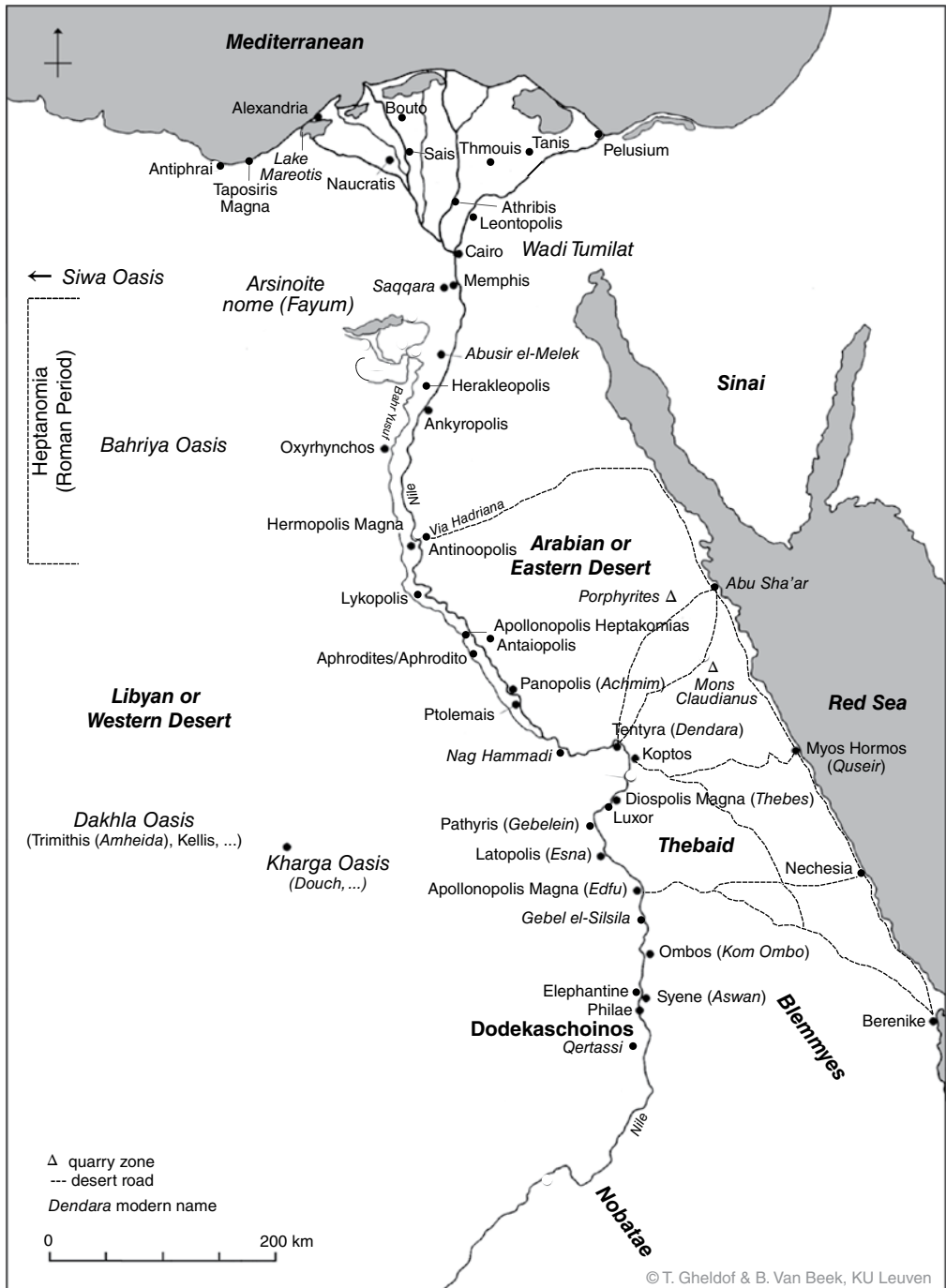
Constantine I, the Great	324–337
325, in a letter to the Egyptian Church, the Council of Nicaea condemns Arianism, reintegrates the Melitians, and fixes the date of Easter	
328–373, Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria, exiled five times by four emperors	
330, foundation of new capital Constantinople	
337, after death of Constantine I, empire divided between three sons	

Constantine II	337–340
Constans II	337–350
Constantius II	337–361
Julian, the Apostate	361–363
Jovian	363–364
Valens	364–378
Theodosius I, the Great	379–395
c. 385, Shenoute of Atripe becomes head of the monastery founded by his uncle, Pgol	
391, destruction of Serapeum in Alexandria, replaced by a church	
391/2, Theodosian interdiction of pagan worship	
394, last Hieroglyph carved in temple of Harendotes (Philae)	
<i>395, Roman Empire divided after death of Theodosius I. Here are listed the emperors of the Eastern Roman Empire:</i>	
Arcadius	395–408
Theodosius II	408–450
431, Council of Ephesus condemns Nestorianism	
Marcian	450–457
451, Council of Chalcedon condemns Monophysitism; beginning of the split of the Egyptian Coptic Church and Byzantine Church	
Leo	457–474
Zeno	474–491
476, fall of the Western Roman Empire	
Anastasius	491–518
First Blemmyan War at the southern frontier	
Justin I	518–527
520s, foundation of Christian school by John Philoponus in Alexandria	
Justinian	527–565
c. 535–537, closure of Isis temple in Philae, where the Blemmyes were the main worshippers	
540–543 and 563–568, Second and Third Blemmyan War at the southern frontier	
Justin II	565–578
Tiberius II	578–582
Maurice	582–602
Phocas	602–610
Heraclius	610–641
619–629, occupation of Egypt by Persians (Sasanian Empire)	

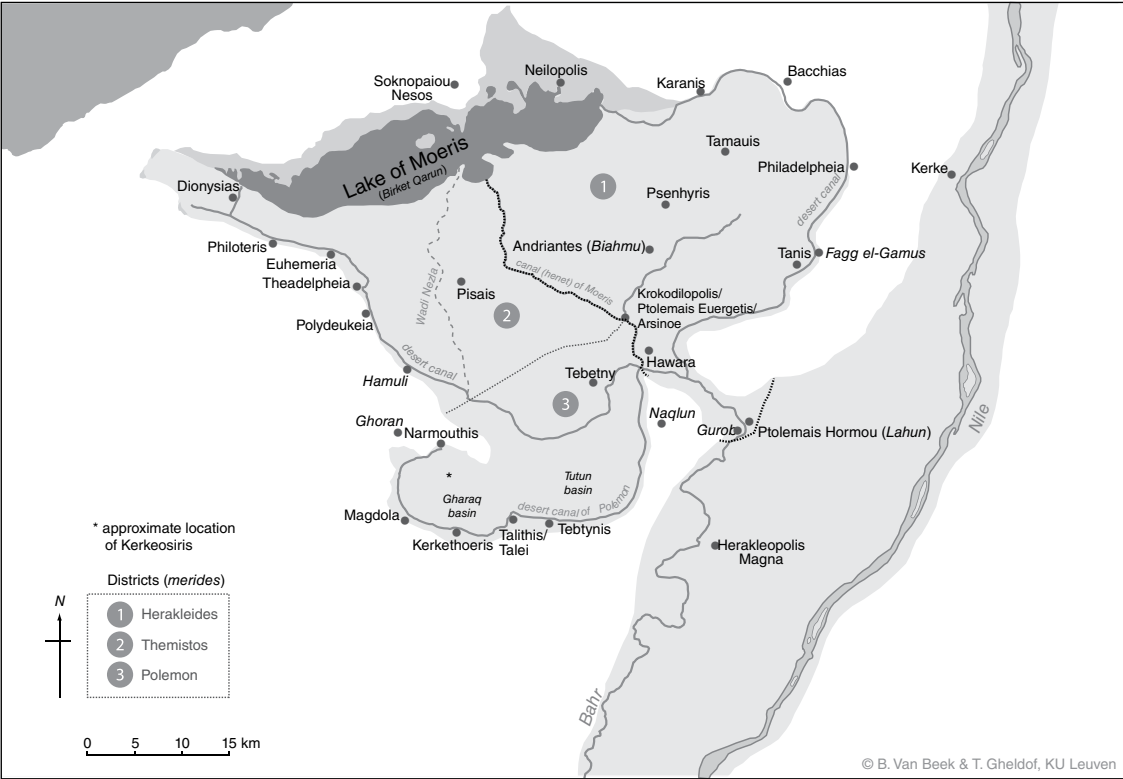
Arab Rule (since AD 639/42)

639–642, general ‘Amr ibn al-‘As conquers Egypt
641, foundation of Fustat, first capital under Muslim rule
645/6, weak attempt of Byzantines to win Egypt back
706, Arabic becomes the official language in Egypt

Maps



1. Greco-Roman and Late Antique Egypt



2. The Fayum

PART I

**GRECO-ROMAN
EGYPT EXPLORED**

CHAPTER ONE

Unique Sources in an Unusual Setting

Arthur Verhoogt

1.1 A Wealth of Sources

Whoever studies ancient Egypt has to deal with an abundance of available sources, making this region unique among those of the ancient world (Wendrich 2010). In addition to the non-organic archeological and epigraphical remains that are available for other regions and periods, the desert climate of Egypt also provides a wealth of organic sources such as wood, linen, papyrus, and mudbrick. Taken together, the sources allow for a much more detailed historical analysis for Egypt, although sometimes the abundance causes extra interpretational problems, because the models needed to analyze and explain what is happening are much more complex than those for regions with fewer sources. There is always the chance of an odd text or object not fitting the model.

In order to gauge what exactly an Egyptian site can yield, it is perhaps worthwhile to browse through a preliminary report from a recent excavation. This is not to claim that there is a “typical” archeological yield for sites, including trash dumps, in Egypt, but just to illustrate the abundance of material that is coming from even short and limited excavations. The example is the short 2009 season at the Red Sea harbor site of Berenike (Sidebotham and Zych 2011). Apart from the more typical descriptions of magnetic surveys and trenches excavated, finds are presented in a number of categories: archeobotanical and archeozoological remains, ostraca (and other writing materials, such as papyrus), coins, glass, an *intaglio*, and pottery. Whatever does not fit in one of these specific categories is presented in a chapter on “Finds.” The 134 individual finds listed here include terracotta oil lamps, a mixture of various items made of wood and basketry, textiles, and a mix of so-called “personal accessories,” such as beads. All this is the result of “17 days of

actual digging” (Sidebotham and Zych 2011, p. 9), showing what Egyptian archeologists have to deal with in number and variety, especially when excavating a trash dump.

The abundance of Egyptian sources is even more telling for the focus of the current volume, the Greco-Roman and Byzantine Period, from the late fourth century BC to AD 642, when Egypt became part of the Caliphate. Most remarkable about the sources available for this period are the written texts. Not only is there simply a greater variety of written sources (inscriptions, papyri, ostraca, wooden tablets, wax tablets, etc.), there is also a much greater linguistic diversity, with documents surviving not only in various stages of ancient Egyptian (Hieroglyphic, Hieratic, Demotic, Coptic), but also in Greek, Latin, and various other languages, such as Aramaic and Arabic. Many of these languages were in use at the same time, and often by the same people, which has made available Egyptian sources for more theoretical debates about bilingualism and code-switching (e.g. Adams 2003; Vierros 2012). On a more practical level, it is only because three languages occurred on the same writing surface of the Rosetta Stone that Thomas Young and Jean-François Champollion were originally able to decode Hieroglyphs (Robinson 2012).

The contents of the written record of ancient Egypt are very varied, especially in this late period. The main distinction is that between literary and documentary texts, with an in-between category that is commonly called “subliterary,” or “para-literary.” The latter category contains magical texts, medical prescriptions, prayers, and so on. Literary texts comprise the books of the ancient world, not only the works of Greek (and Latin) literature and Christian biblical texts, but also representative samples of Egyptian literary texts (see Chapter 31). The category of documentary texts is the largest, showing that ancient Egypt, although perhaps not a literate society per se, did function as a semi-literate one, with many aspects of life being conducted in writing (legal claims, registration of land ownership, census, etc.) (Eyre 2013).

Documentary texts come in all shapes and genres. There are very long texts on papyrus, such as second-century BC papyri listing court proceedings (P.Tor.Choach. 12 in Greek: 192 cm long, 10 columns; P.BM Siut in Demotic: 290 cm long, 10 columns) and a contemporaneous agricultural account (P.Tebt. IV 1103: c. 286 cm long, 23 columns). And there are short texts on papyrus, ostraca, and other writing materials, such as a late fourth-century BC order not to enter (SB XIV 11942: three lines of Greek writing on papyrus), an early third-century BC receipt for burial tax (P.OI Muhs 8: four Demotic lines of writing on potsherd), and a second-century AD order to arrest (SB XXIV 16005: five lines of Greek writing on papyrus). The contents of the documentary papyri are very broad, ranging from administrative documents (correspondence, accounts, etc.) to private letters and various lists.

In all their variety and broadness, however, it is important to note that texts do not come from all parts of Egypt or from all chronological periods in equal number (Habermann 1998). As most of the writing surfaces are organic, they depend for their survival on dry, desert-like circumstances, preferably without too much subsequent habitation. Most written sources, then, survive from the desert edge, with virtually no papyri coming from the humid Delta or continuously inhabited and used parts of the country such as the center of the Fayum. This geographical chance of survival has consequences for what we can expect from our written source material. For example, the lack of papyri from the Nile Delta means that almost none survive from the administrative center of Egypt, the capital city of Alexandria. And settlements at the desert edge, as a rule, represent rural rather than

urban Egypt (without denying the existence of close connections between villages and the urban centers).

Another thing to realize is that in most cases, the caches of written texts that do survive are not the untouched records of the ancient world, but are the result of selection and choice. Many of the written sources, as was already clear from our summary of the Berenike excavation report, come from trash dumps or have been reused as second-hand paper in mummy cases or mummified crocodiles. This means that somebody in Antiquity made a decision to discard these texts for whatever reason. We thus find the texts that were no longer needed, rather than the active archive of a person or government official. Texts removed from an archive can then find another use, for example as scrap paper, fuel for burning, or material to construct mummy casings for humans or to strengthen crocodile bodies in the process of their mummification. In this process, as shown by various archeological finds, texts from one archive can be mixed up with texts from another. For example, the cache of papyri found in 1934 in the cellar of a house in Tebtynis consists of texts discarded from at least three separate private (or professional?) archives (Gallazzi 1990; Smolders 2004). The papyri recovered from crocodile mummies in 1899/1900 also contain administrative texts removed from various village offices (Verhoogt 1998). The modern scholar will find the texts in this secondary use context and will be required to actively reconstruct the original discarded groups.

Alternatively, discarded texts can be found thrown away on a local garbage dump. Such dumps may be inside an inhabited space (such as a courtyard or a stairwell that went out of use), close to an inhabited space, or farther removed at the edge of the settlement. The archeological record offers examples of all such possible dump sites in Egyptian towns and villages (Verhoogt 2012). However, it is important to realize that trash is not a static thing and that there may be movement between these sites, such as when one was cleaned out for development and the trash was removed to another dump. Alternatively, the trash may even have been returned to the original site for use in construction projects (Dicus 2014). Modern excavations give ample examples of texts in trash dumps with precise find circumstances (e.g. Berenike, Trimithis, Mons Claudianus), and also many texts found in earlier excavations come from trash dumps (e.g. Oxyrhynchos, Theadelphia), although here the precise context is more difficult to ascertain (e.g. Rathbone 2009, p. 22 for papyri probably found in a dump in Theadelphia in the early 1900s).

Admittedly, the difference between “dumping” and “storing” texts is difficult for the modern eye to distinguish, but the archeological record also offers possible examples of the actual storing of documents. There have been a number of finds of papyri that were wrapped carefully and stored in jars in cellars (Vandorpe 2009). There are also groups of texts that were stored in tombs and houses, only to be discovered by modern-day archeologists or illegal diggers. It is then difficult to establish why the texts were still found where they were found. Is it simply that they were forgotten by their owners? Or did major events contribute to residents moving away without taking their documents? The latter situation seems to be the case for the many Pathyris archives found inside what may have been houses, left behind when the residents fled after a military revolt in 88 BC (Vandorpe and Waebens 2010a).

Another problem with written sources is that they represent not the population as a whole but, more frequently, the literate groups in society, which, in the ancient world, also

tend to be the more wealthy and privileged groups. At the same time, the literate elites we see at work in Egypt's documentary record are more varied than the elites we see in the epigraphic record elsewhere in the ancient world, who as a rule represent the top layers of society. Subaltern groups do appear in the written record, because of ancient Egypt's dependency on writing to claim ownership and payment of taxes. Even the most illiterate farmer would have at least one or two receipts for payment of taxes at home.

The greatest producer and absorber of documents, perhaps, were the ancient state and its representatives on the various levels. Documents produced included various reports and surveys registering the composition of households or ownership of land, as well as the registration of rents and taxes owed on land and property. There was also much written correspondence between various state actors, either giving directions or submitting reports. In addition, the state also required people who wanted to engage the state to their benefit, to do so in writing.

Although Greco-Roman Egypt certainly has the top place in the survival of papyrological written sources from Antiquity (more than 78 000 papyri, ostraca, and texts on wood or parchment; see Table 1.1), it does not have sole rights. Writing materials have survived from elsewhere (about 2900 papyri, ostraca, and texts on wood or parchment), which can be compared in format, language, and content with those known from Egypt. From the extreme western frontier of the Roman Empire, near Hadrian's Wall, for example, comes a cache of several hundred thin wooden tablets used for writing (e.g. Bowman 2004). Another important source of writing materials was found near Mt. Vesuvius in Italy. Most attention has been given to the library of hundreds of literary works that was carbonized during the AD 79 eruption of the volcano (e.g. Delattre 2006), but there have also been a number of groups of waxed tablets found in Pompeii and Herculaneum that have been very important for the economic history of the early first-century AD (e.g. Terpstra 2013). In addition, potsherds may have been used for writing throughout the ancient world at a much grander scale than previously assumed (Bagnall 2011). Table 1.1 shows the geographical spread of the documentation (Egypt versus the rest of the Mediterranean): 96.5% of the organic writing materials are found in Egypt, versus only 3.2% of the texts on stone (cf. Clarysse n.d. for the Greek documentation).

Table 1.1 Geographical spread of the documentation in the Mediterranean world.

	<i>Outside Egypt</i>	<i>Egypt</i>	<i>Egypt (%)</i>
<i>Organic material</i>			
Papyri	762	49 513	98.5
Ostraca	310	23 981	98.7
Texts on wood	1 286	3 698	74
Texts on parchment	497	1 097	68.8
<i>Total</i>	2 855	78 289	96.5
<i>Compare</i>			
Texts on stone (including graffiti)	445 256	14 354	3.2

Source: Trismegistos online October 2016.

While small pockets of written sources have thus been found all over the ancient world, scholars have compared the picture in Egypt mostly with the written sources from the ancient Near East and the eastern part of the Roman Empire (Gascou 2009). There is a similar mix of types of text, not only literary (e.g. Nessana), but also documentary (official texts, private legal documents, etc.). In addition, there are, apart from the texts in Greek and Latin, also texts from the various language communities in the Near East (Aramaic, Arabic, Nabataean, etc.). The chronological range of texts from the Near East is less broad than for those from Egypt, with almost none surviving from the Hellenistic Period. An interesting difference is in the development of handwriting, with an earlier move to what papyrologists consider a typical four-lined Byzantine type (Crisci 1996). However, as more Egyptian texts with image become available, we may have to revisit this statement (It is now easy to assess the often – for people trained to boldly claim date ranges on the basis of handwriting – disconcerting range of possible contemporaneous handwritings via the website <http://PapPal.info>.)

The abundance of written sources for Late Period Egypt has tilted the historiography of this time and region toward an almost exclusive focus on texts. When Late Period Egypt entered the scholarly discourse in the late nineteenth century, it became the territory of classical philologists rather than archeologists and (Late Period) Egyptologists (obviously, the Pharaonic Period remained in high Egyptological demand during this time). And even within the category of ancient Greek texts there was a clear focus on literary texts that could provide, it was expected, the missing links between ancient author and medieval manuscript tradition. In addition, the hunt for the most ancient Christian texts also focused the scholarly interests of the time, fueled by finds like the so-called Sayings of Jesus (actually a fragment of the Gospel of Thomas), allegedly among the first papyri to be found at Oxyrhynchus in 1897 (Parsons 2007, p. 15). With regard to non-literary texts, preference was given to official documents that could illustrate the workings of the Ptolemaic and Roman state and to texts that illustrated the private lives of ancient Egyptians. Given that papyrology was at this time mostly the field of classical philologists, scholars tended to focus on Greek (and the handful of Latin) texts, which seriously impacted the resulting historical analysis. This is most clear in the study of Egyptian land tenure, which was originally based only on Greek texts from one region in Egypt (the Fayum) and thus completely ignored the Egyptian evidence from the Nile valley. This Greek focus has been remedied only since the late 1980s, when Demotic texts were also taken into account when writing the history of Ptolemaic Egypt. This happened particularly in the Leiden and Leuven schools but has now become generally accepted, leading to all-encompassing studies by, for example, Manning (2003a, 2010) and Monson (2012b). A similar trend is currently also underway for later periods of Egyptian history with the inclusion of Coptic and Arabic texts in historical studies of the country.

The same focus on texts also triggered a very active trade in ancient papyri, where individuals and institutions were more interested in the texts themselves than in their provenance. Egyptian antiquarians were more than willing to feed this market by initiating their own “excavations” and encouraging local farmers to search for and sell papyri (and other artifacts of interest) in the margins of existing scholarly excavations (Davoli 2015). They also played the market by dividing caches of texts that clearly must have been found together (or even were part of the same codex; see e.g. Nongbri 2014b) and offering

them for sale separately to different buyers. As a result, some of the more famous archives (e.g. of Zenon and of Heroninos; see Chapter 17) from ancient Egypt have been dispersed over more than a dozen collections worldwide (Figure 1.1). The papyrus trade fed most Western collections and museums that are currently still in existence. In this trade, too, the same hierarchy existed, with literary texts – including Christian ones – fetching much more money than financial accounts. It is sad to see that in some circles, the same ruthless interest in especially literary/Christian texts still exists (see the various blogposts on the Green Collection’s acquisition of papyri by Roberta Mazza).

The archeology of Late Period Egypt came to fruition only in the course of the twentieth century (Bagnall 2001; Bagnall and Davoli 2011). The text-only approach was replaced with a text-and-architecture one in the 1920s and 1930s, with the Italian excavations at Tebtynis and the University of Michigan excavations at Karanis being the most well-known representatives. It is quite clear that the abundance of portable finds from these sites surprised even the excavators, who were in no position to deal with everything. Thus, for dating and interpretation, they focused on what they knew best: papyri and coins. Only in the late 1980s did continuous excavation according to the methods developed for more traditional parts of the Mediterranean world (Greece, Italy) enter Egypt, with Claudio Gallazzi’s excavations in Tebtynis being the trailblazer. Soon, other exemplary excavations followed, especially in the Fayum and Eastern and Western Desert.

The twentieth century also saw a more holistic approach to the textual evidence from Late Period Egypt. Texts were no longer studied as texts per se, but as important historical sources with an unparalleled level of detail. In order to tease out as much as possible from these fragmentary sources, models from the historical and social sciences were introduced, with sometimes exciting results. For example, comparative demographic models were applied to the evidence from especially Roman Egypt, leading to important insights into Egypt’s demographic regime (Bagnall and Frier 2006).

A final development that is currently underway is a return to the study of papyri as material and archeological objects. This is not to say that there is no longer interest in the actual contents of the texts studied, but they are now studied as a whole package, with ample attention to the physical properties of the writing surface and of the writing itself. Studies of literary papyri led the way here (e.g. Johnson 2004), but recently the same amount of detail can be found in studies of documentary texts (e.g. Ast 2014; Claytor 2014). Study of writing surfaces as material objects also includes their interpretation as archeological objects (Verhoogt 2012). This is of course being done for texts being excavated during current excavations (e.g. Cribiore-Davoli 2013), but there is also an attempt to reconstruct the contexts of texts that are parts of collections without further find information (e.g. Vandorpe and Waebens 2010a).

It is clear that the original focus on texts has often separated Egyptian history from its physical environment. This has led to some interesting interpretational results, such as the reading of one text as being about how to catch pregnant mice (from the very literary Greek *entoka*), rather than how to catch mice in the Egyptian village of Toka (*en Toka*: more suitable for an Egyptian setting) (P.Oxy. II 299). As far as we can establish, the practical question how one would specifically target pregnant mice did not enter scholars’ minds. Recent scholarship has brought the physical setting back into the interpretation of texts. Most studies of Egypt currently begin with a chapter in which the physical space of the country is presented (e.g. Monson 2012b; Sijpesteijn 2013).

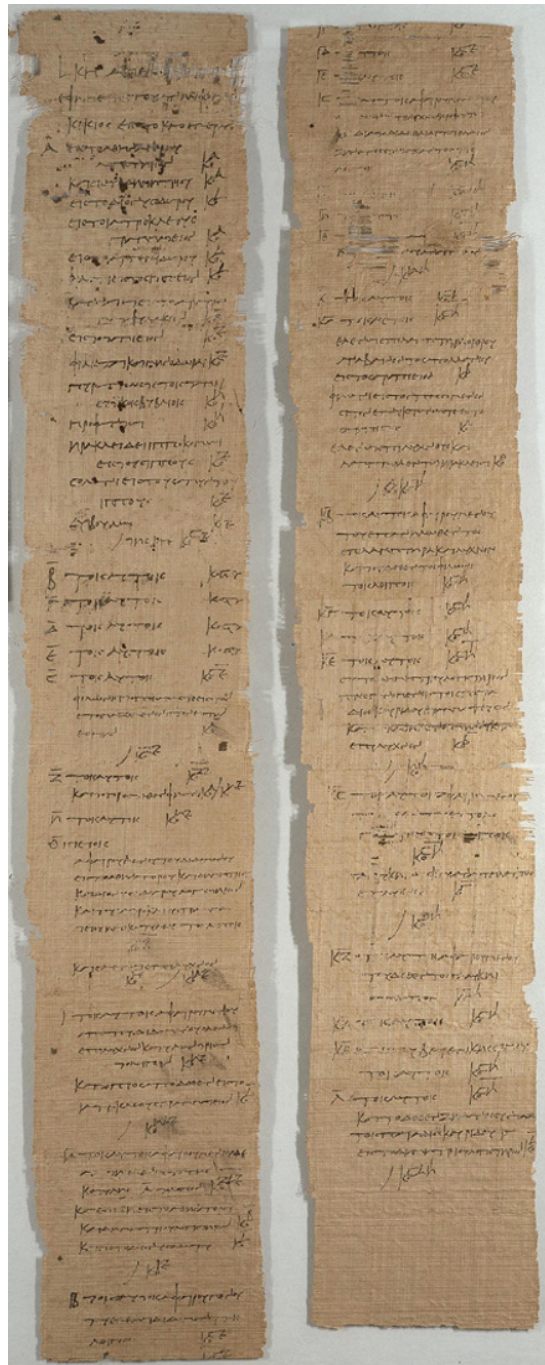


Figure 1.1 Daily record of lamp oil for the retinue of the minister of finances. The day numbers are found in the left column. The papyrus, almost 2.5 m long and of a fine texture, belongs to the Zenon archive (257 BC). Source: courtesy Ann Arbor, University of Michigan, Graduate Library P.Cornell II 1, cf. P.Cornell 1. Image digitally reproduced with the permission of the Papyrology Collection, Graduate Library, University of Michigan.

1.2 The Physical Landscape

Egypt's history is tied up with the Nile, the desert, and the Mediterranean (Parcak 2010). The Nile provides Egypt's connection to Africa and enables a successful agricultural regime (although admittedly nowadays the link is not as direct as before the 1960s building of the Aswan High Dam). The desert secures Egypt's borders and, with its aridity, brings forth the abundance of materials that survive from periods other than the present day. And the Mediterranean provides Egypt's access to the networks of the Near East and southern Europe.

The interplay between Nile, desert, and Mediterranean has shaped an Egypt that is so unique in its physical and ecological setting that it has been difficult for modern scholars to fit it in broader historical models. The actual and perceived otherness of Egypt as compared with other regions has often blurred or even prevented attempts at analysis, although in recent years this has been remedied with great success. A case in point is the position of Egypt in Roman imperial studies, where the original tendency to see it as "other" and not representative for the incorporation of the Near East into the Roman Empire has given way to a more balanced approach that allows for its inclusion in Roman provincial studies, especially in the East (Monson 2012b; see also Chapter 37).

Egypt's lifeline is – and has for several millennia been – the River Nile. Apart from annually providing the rich sediment that covered the Egyptian fields (especially upriver), it also enabled traffic from south to north and (with slightly more difficulty) vice versa, and allowed abundant fishing to add to the population's diet. The Nile also shaped Egypt's agricultural regime (Chapter 15). It divided the year in clear segments, with an inundation season, a sowing season, and a harvest season. During the inundation season (roughly June–September), the focus was on preparing the country for the upcoming flood by cleaning irrigation canals, repairing dykes, and so on. The sowing season (roughly October–February) included the preparation of the fields, the actual sowing, and the weeding of the fields to ensure a good crop. The harvest season (March–June) included not only the physical harvesting of the fields, but also the storage and transportation of crops and the payment of taxes. The Egyptian state, whether pharaonic, Saite, Ptolemaic, or Roman, was always heavily involved in all stages, because the outcome of the agricultural year was the basis for its financial well-being. This involvement left a substantial paper trail, as already discussed.

The most fertile fields were the ones in the Nile valley, about two-thirds of which were flooded every year, even in years when the inundation was low. The most difficult fields for a farmer were the ones in higher-lying parts, where sufficient inflow of water was not secured on a year-to-year basis and crop yields could vary greatly. Here, there was more effort needed to make sure that the fields were irrigated. That the ancient state was willing and able to deal with the vagaries of nature is shown by the fact that annual surveys by government officials assessed the natural state of the fields and, if necessary, adjusted the rents levied on them (Manning 2003a).

The overall nature of Egypt's landscape within the desert boundaries on either end remained largely the same for all of its history until the building of the Aswan High Dam (Bowman and Rogan 1999). Bordering the Nile, lakes, swamps, and bigger canals grew reeds (including the papyrus reed) and flowers (such as the lotus). Interspersed with larger

and smaller settlements on higher-lying parts were the fields used to grow crops to feed people and animals. Between and around these fields were bigger and smaller canals surrounded by low dykes that directed floodwaters during the inundation season. And between these fields, there stood occasional trees (acacia, tamarisk, palm date). It is not surprising that in this landscape, the widely available papyrus became the writing material of choice (Figure 1.1), instead of the much more scarce wood (Figure 1.2). What did change over time were some of the actual crops that were grown in this landscape. The staple crop in pharaonic Egypt was emmer wheat, but with the coming of the Greeks, this gradually changed to hard wheat (*Triticum durum*). Similarly, the Greeks expanded viticulture and oleoculture in the Egyptian landscape (van Minnen 2001a), which was a considerable economic investment given the import of vines and the manual irrigation necessary.

Recent research has also shown that there was not one Egypt (Manning 2003a; Monson 2012b). There are substantial differences in ecology and in the agricultural and

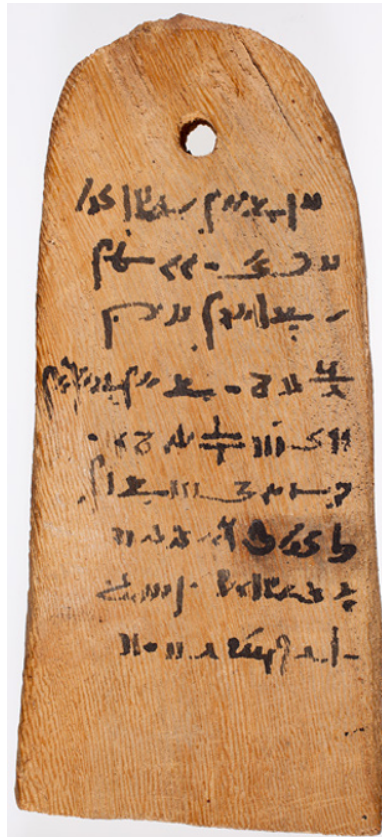


Figure 1.2 Mummy label in Egyptian Demotic having the shape of a stele. According to this label, a priest in Upper Egyptian Hermonthis has the permission to perform burial for Tnepfersais, daughter of Horos. Wood, although scarce in Egypt, was regularly used to identify mummies (99 BC). Source: courtesy Leiden, Papyrological Institute V 3, cf. Short Texts II 427. © Leids Papyrologisch Instituut.

demographic regimes between, for example, the Nile Valley and the Fayum, a depression in the desert c. 80 km south west of modern Cairo. But even within the Fayum, there are differences between the center and the periphery. These latter differences can only be distinguished in the archeological record, as almost no texts survive from the continuously inhabited Fayum center, apart from a big cache of papyri found in the ruins of the capital Arsinoe in 1877. What is even more important is that it is now clear that the state (Ptolemaic and Roman) allowed for this regional variety and did not impose a one-size-fits-all approach (Manning 2003a; Monson 2012b).

The deserts to the east and west of Egypt have been the subject of extensive archeological activity in the last decade (Bagnall and Davoli 2011). On the eastern side, the focus has been on the many fortresses and Red Sea harbors that formed part of the Roman road and trade network. On the western side, focus has been on the urban centers that developed in the oases. The various excavations have shown that the desert was part of Egypt, too, but again the Eastern and Western Deserts were different (Bingen 1998). The Eastern Desert presents us more with low-key settlements built to accommodate temporary visitors traveling to and from the Red Sea. In the oases on the western side of the Nile, there was more permanent settlement, and thus the development of urban institutions and elites. On both sides of the Nile, however, there were also several nomadic tribes that roamed the desert and often came into contact (friendly and less friendly) with the settlements.

1.3 Conclusion

Egypt, then, has much to offer for scholars interested in studying and understanding its long and varied history. The desert climate provides an impressive number of different sources that make it stand out from the remainder of the ancient world. Prominent among the organic sources that survive in great number from Egypt are writing implements such as papyrus, potsherds, wooden tablets, etc., although it should be noted that this prominence may be more the result of scholarly interests than of actual numbers.

The written sources from ancient Egypt (combined with pharaonic tombs and Egyptian temples) have attracted the most scholarly (and also general-public) attention from the nineteenth century onward. And while indeed it cannot be denied that these are unique, special, and important, they are part of the archeological record and should be interpreted in tandem with all other information (Chapter 2). Recent scholarship has shown that this is the way to go, not only for texts found during current excavations (e.g. O.Trim.), but also for those that were found during the earlier years of the discipline, when find circumstances were not always noted.

Similarly, it is important to explicitly acknowledge the particularities of the Egyptian landscape in every study of ancient Egypt, but especially in studies dealing with written sources. In many cases, such documents are the result of the particular landscape of the country and of the ancient residents' way of dealing with it. It is only when these texts are brought back into their physical environment that their full potential for analysis becomes available.

FURTHER READING

Bagnall (2001) and Bagnall and Davoli (2011) provide good overviews of recent archaeological activity in Egypt. The second article also provides a list of online resources for a number of these excavations (and their results). Bagnall (2009b) is the most up-to-date introduction to the field of papyrology. The gateway into the written world of Egypt from the eighth-century BC to the eighth-century AD is the Leuven-based Trismegistos project (<http://trismegistos.org>). Those working with Greek ostraca and papyri should consult the Papyrological Navigator (<http://papyri.info>); see Chapter 2.

CHAPTER TWO

Modern Scholars at Work in a Digital and Multidisciplinary Setting

Mark Depaew and Dorota Dzierzbicka

The traditional image of a scholar of the ancient world, including Greco-Roman and Late Antique Egypt, is that of a lone connoisseur of a specific field of learning, to use that archaic word. Perhaps with the aid of an assistant, a “disciple” whose hope it was to tread in his or her master’s footsteps one day, this expert answered questions and solved problems. Judgments were based on a thorough knowledge of the available source material and, as scholarship advanced in the course of the twentieth century, of secondary literature. Scholarly research was presented in often rare printed texts that referred to the elements on which the judgment was made, often in footnotes. The scholar was the one who led the way: the guide introducing visiting readers into an opaque world.

The advent of the computer has profoundly shaken this microcosm. Initially only an advanced typewriter, and later mainly a heuristic tool, information technology has now spread to all aspects of academic life – research as well as teaching. This chapter explores the repercussions of the digitalization of scholarship of the ancient world in general, and of Greco-Roman and Late Antique Egypt in particular. We distinguish four areas, all narrowly intertwined: multidisciplinary, the impact of digitalization on heuristics, publication culture, and research methods.

2.1 The Growth of Scholarly Disciplines and Multidisciplinarity

Traditionally, the study of Greco-Roman and Late Antique Egypt has been rather fragmented. The diversity of the sources – in transmission, material, language, and date – increasingly compelled scholars to specialize. This resulted in specific disciplines,

often with their own curricula and training. One of the oldest divides is that between material remains and written sources, with archeology on the one hand and philology on the other. For a long time, archeology focused on “beaux arts” and esthetic aspects, which now generally are the domain of what is commonly called “art history.” Similarly, philology used to focus on the (medieval) manuscript tradition of “Classical” authors, paying special attention to their style and method, in historiography and literature studies. Increasingly, however, objects and texts of “daily life” have demanded attention (for the objects, see later).

For philology, the study of less arcane but more tangible textual remains led to the creation of subdisciplines such as epigraphy, the study of inscriptions on stone and other hard materials, and papyrology (focusing on softer writing surfaces almost exclusively preserved in Egypt).

These new philological disciplines also brought scholars of Antiquity into contact with languages other than Greek and Latin, which since the Renaissance had been almost the exclusive vehicles of knowledge about Egypt. Following the decipherment of Hieroglyphic and its derivative scripts by Champollion in 1822, historical sources in the local vernacular became available in increasing quantities. The orientalist and Egyptologists who studied these documents and developed their own conventions initially almost all knew the “Classical” languages, but not all “Classical scholars” bothered to learn the local ones. In many cases, a rift grew between specialists of Greek and Latin on the one hand, and those of Egyptian on the other.

On top of that, the thousand years of foreign political rule between Alexander and the Arab invasion were far from what tradition considered the pinnacle of ancient Egyptian civilization. These late periods were long (and to some extent still are) considered a niche. They were the domain of the not especially numerous specialists of Demotic and Coptic – the later stages of the Egyptian language – or of those dealing with religious temple texts or Books of the Dead, a common type of funerary composition. As a result, the Egypt of the Greco-Roman Period as documented in ancient Egyptian has become somewhat estranged from the Egypt known from Greek sources. In a similar way, the rules of Ptolemies, Romans, and Byzantines gave each period of Egyptian history its own specific political and sociocultural characteristics, and each has attracted different scholars with their own backgrounds, interests, and capacities.

Yet, the history of Egypt is a continuum, and its society was multicultural. There was no wall separating “Egyptians” from “Greeks” or, later, “Romans,” and it is impossible to think of, for example, the state administration of the Ptolemies or the tax regime of the Romans as created *ab ovo*. Perhaps the increasing multiculturalism resulting from the world’s globalization has made us more aware that a broad perspective and attention for the *longue durée* are essential. The focus is often no longer on political events (“histoire des événements”), but on social and economic phenomena. All sources, of whatever nature and in whatever language, can shed important light on parts of the puzzle. At the same time, the exponential increase of available information has made sometimes far-reaching specialization inevitable, rendering it difficult for individual scholars to embody this multidisciplinary. Cooperation with colleagues from other fields, often from other universities and countries, is frequently the most practical solution to this problem. Nice examples are the study of the Judeo-Syrian-Egyptian conflict of 103–101 BC in Van’t

Dack et al. (1989), where literary texts, papyri and epigraphy in various languages have been edited together, and Porten et al. (1996), where papyrological evidence from Elephantine in all possible languages has been presented in a single volume.

Multidisciplinarity is also a standard in archeology. As a field of study, it has in fact drawn on the methodologies of other disciplines from its inception. Virtually all archeological missions include, at least at some point, an epigraphist, a numismatist, an archeozoologist, a paleobotanist, a geomorphologist, etc. But a research project cannot be called truly interdisciplinary if these specialists just do their work and leave, or if they carry out their studies alongside – but not with – archeologists. Rather, interdisciplinarity consists in a scientific exchange in which representatives of various disciplines add their voices to a discussion and together come up with both answers and questions.

There has certainly been a push toward building such multidisciplinary teams in archeology. For instance, specialists in the study of paleobotanical and archeozoological material have become regular members of excavation teams alongside experts in ceramics and inscribed material (Sidebotham and Zych 2011). Some sites require special interest in botanical remains, particularly if these remains are remarkably well preserved, abundant, or varied, or if they are expected to be vehicles of especially important information. For instance, examination of the botanical remains from Roman and Islamic ports at Quseir el-Qadim (Myos Hormos) shed light on patterns of food consumption, culinary and medicinal commodities, the Eastern trade in spices, exploitation of wood, and innovation in agriculture (van der Veen 2011).

An archeologist can sometimes plan which specialists will be needed in an expedition in a given season, but at other times it is easier to invite experts to study material collected beforehand. It has become a standard procedure on many sites that samples for scientific analysis are taken and stored awaiting specialists. The fact that the modern academic community is well-connected (also in the digital sense) helps in communicating with potential collaborators. Digitized documentation can be shared with any specialist on the planet, for instance via password-protected project databases. Archeology has become a globalized affair, with multinational teams and specialists able to bring work on material home, maximizing time and cost-efficiency.

Cooperation between archeologists and papyrologists on Greco-Roman sites in Egypt occurs on multiple planes and is perhaps a special case of multidisciplinary work. It is nowadays a rule that papyrologists work together with archeologists on every site that regularly yields inscribed material. On sites rich in textual finds, like Soknopaiou Nesos and Tebtynis in the Fayum, Amheida in the Dakhla Oasis, and the *praesidia* or stations in the Eastern Desert, papyrologists take charge of excavation projects and run them in cooperation with archeologists. On sites like Berenike on the Red Sea coast, where texts are regularly found, integration of all textual and archeological information is necessary to create a full, comprehensive image of the past (Wendrich et al. 2003). Evidence from sites like Karanis – no longer excavated but once rich in both papyri and archeological finds – is revisited as new interpretations arise (Landvatter 2016).

Collaboration between papyrologists and archeologists starts in the trench, as the study of dated texts helps to resolve complex stratigraphic issues (Ast and Davoli 2016). The work of the papyrologist, in turn, is not complete without data provided by archeologists and other specialists. For instance, archeological data about the context of textual finds is

indispensable for correct interpretation of the texts' significance. Reading texts also cannot be detached from material studies on their support. Research on inscribed pottery calls for a collaboration between a ceramicist and an epigraphist or papyrologist, as neither the inscriptions nor the jars should be published separately, ignoring the other. The publication of ostraca is no longer considered complete without a ceramological description of sherds (Bacot 2009). Also, if inscriptions are in more than one language, the research team working on the assemblage should be able to read and publish all of them.

It has become evident that the study of papyrological data must be considered an important part of the research process on all Greco-Roman sites in Egypt, not just the ones rich in textual finds. Archeologists draw on papyri to gain deeper insight into various research topics (e.g. Mossakowska-Gaubert 2016). This was recently exemplified in a study of Ptolemaic baths in Taposiris Magna (Fournet and Redon 2013; see Chapter 33). The remarkably well-preserved heating system of these baths led the authors to re-examine the issue of heating devices in baths through both archeological and papyrological sources, even though the site itself preserves scarce inscribed material.

New directions in research have led to renewed interest in the economy of Greco-Roman Egypt. Economic historians turn to archeological sources for new quantifiable data on trade and production. Studies on economic questions like production, consumption, and distribution of various goods are also particularly fertile ground for combining archeological and documentary evidence (e.g. Dzierzbicka 2005). Papyri and artifacts complement one another, and only their combined use provides a broad picture of production and distribution patterns in Greco-Roman Egypt. The same can be said about the study of everyday life, which combines analyses of material – human and animal bones, botanical remains, ceramics – with textual evidence that preserves the voices of real inhabitants of the past (e.g. Brun and Cuvigny 2011–2012). There are in fact few research topics in studies on Greco-Roman and Late Antique Egypt in which papyrology and archeology do not cross paths.

2.2 Impact of Digitalization – Textual Sources

2.2.1 *Digitalization and Scholarly Heuristics*

Multidisciplinarity is thus omnipresent in modern scholarship. And although this trend predates the digital age, it has undeniably received a strong digital boost. The worlds of Egyptology, papyrology, epigraphy, and the study of “Classical” literary texts are now increasingly connected through common digital tools. These instruments facilitate dealing with idiosyncratic disciplinary conventions, which up until very recently made certain areas of scholarship inaccessible to the outsider. And since it is now so much easier to look over the wall, scholars are also increasingly doing so.

It is indeed in scholarly heuristics that the impact of digitalization is most noticeable. There was a time when finding antique sources for a research problem entailed reading through all accessible evidence, perhaps in some cases taking the shortcut of available indices or concordances. This changed fundamentally with the emergence of digital tools such as the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* (TLG 1988), a CD-ROM containing most of the Greek

literary texts preserved through the manuscript tradition. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, it caused a lot of excitement when a computer program could come up with all attestations of a word in just three or four hours, instead of the days or months of hard work previously needed. Through cooperation with the Packard Humanities Institute, a substantial number of Greek inscriptions could even be searched simultaneously, making this an indispensable tool (TLG 1988). For Late Period Egypt, however, the most important innovation came not too long afterwards, in 1995, with the online availability of *Perseus* for texts from the mediaeval manuscript tradition, including those in Latin, and the integration in 1996/97 of the *Duke Databank of Documentary Papyri* (DDbDP online). The latter contained the text of almost all published documentary papyri, ostraca, and wooden tablets, so that the full text of most written sources in Latin and Greek was digitally available.

The late twentieth and twenty-first centuries have witnessed a further explosion of digital tools, which are gradually replacing printed dictionaries, concordances, indices, bibliographies, and lists of all kinds. It would be easy to spend all of the pages allocated to this chapter in describing these and various other digital heuristic tools for the study of Greco-Roman and Late Antique Egypt. There are several reasons not to do so, however. The first and most obvious one is that Delattre and Heilporn (2014) is a recent, very exhaustive survey. It shows how wide the panorama has become: scholars no longer exclusively look at texts in Greek and Latin, but include sources in the ancient Egyptian languages and scripts, Coptic, and even Arabic; the evidence from ancient authors is combined with that transmitted directly via papyri and ostraca, inscriptions, coins, and archeology; and – last but not least – the chronological horizon has broadened, from the arrival of the Greeks in Egypt (and even earlier) to the coming of Christianity (and even later).

2.2.2 *Digitalization and Current Scholarly Publishing Practice: PDF*

There is another reason, however, why we will not provide an overview of digital tools here, and that is that print is probably not the right medium for it. Delattre and Heilporn (2014) themselves point out that several websites are no longer kept up to date or have become completely unavailable. This is indeed a problem that should be addressed. But, ironically, a printed article such as theirs (or an earlier, more general one such as Babeu 2010) immediately becomes outdated, and many of the tools they present will have improved, fundamentally changed, become obsolete, or even disappeared by the time future readers search for them. There is a paradox here, in that a digital environment permits us to keep research up to date, but also forces us to do so.

This is a more fundamental change than it might appear at first sight. The current scholarly model relies on static “screenshots”: a publication gathers and synthesizes all available information relevant to a specific subject, which is then presented as the work of a single individual (still the most common option in our fields) or a group of cooperators. Once it has gone public, it is set in proverbial stone: it never, ever changes. Whether printed on paper or as a PDF, a publication ages from the moment it appears: tables and lists become defective as new evidence is published; sources often change names as a result of new publications (in Greek papyrology and epigraphy) or a new numbering system in a museum

(in Egyptology); new parallels lead to re-editions with new readings; even the insights resulting from the article or book will eventually become obsolete in the face of new evidence. Yet, the publication will not change.

This immutability is even considered a positive thing, in the light of stability of reference. Research currently works in a kind of Hegelian way, with thesis, antithesis, and synthesis. Scholars publish articles and books; the information is then reused in new articles, with corrections and additions; both the original scholarly publications and those that interact with them are referred to; and finally someone decides to publish a new book, integrating all the updates, and synthesizing the new insights that result from them. Text editions follow the same pattern: someone produces an *editio princeps*, transliterating the original script into a more readable, standardized format. Nowadays, a translation is added, as well as in most cases a detailed commentary on and analysis of the social, historical, and (if available) archeological context of the source. Some of these observations gradually become obsolete over time, through the growth of the available evidence and changing insights. People also improve on some readings, correct mistakes, perhaps even find new fragments. This new information is scattered over many publications, and it is a painstaking process to gather them, even with the assistance of projects such as the papyrological *Berichtigungsliste* (BL since 1913) or of epigraphic tools such as *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum*, *Bulletin Épigraphique*, and *Année Epigraphique* (SEG since 1923; BullEp since 1913; AE since 1888). Finally, someone decides that enough progress has been made to warrant a new edition, at which point another cycle is set in motion (Schubert 2009).

For a long time, this was the only possible model, because it was logistically difficult for scholars working in different places to communicate their knowledge. In the early nineteenth century, new insights were spread through academies, learned bodies of scholars, and their proceedings. “Open” letters were another possibility, with as a famous example the “Lettre à Monsieur Dacier” announcing the decipherment of Hieroglyphs. In the later nineteenth century, many disciplines got their own journals, some of which still exist today. But although communications in proceedings, journal articles, and – perhaps to a lesser extent – lemmata in encyclopedias were important, the pinnacle of academic achievement was the monograph: a book written by a single author about a specific topic. In the course of the nineteenth century, especially in the wake of the Second World War, a new channel was created: books written by several authors, first in honor of a deceased or retired colleague – the *Fest-* and *Gedenkschriften* – and later as the result of a symposium on a specific topic or a general congress bringing together all specialists in a discipline.

As the scientific community and the resulting academic production grew, publishers became more important. They made sure that the produced scholarship reached its audience. They had the means to spread it through the world’s universities, museums, and other institutions. In collaboration with the academics themselves, they even started organizing a kind of quality control. In some cases, the editors, playing the role of middlemen between the authors and the publishers, assessed the merits of potential contributions themselves. In others, they asked more qualified third parties (“peers”) to do this, often concealing the identity of both the assessed and the assessor: the so-called “double-blind” peer review.

All of this is essentially yesterday’s model: scholars produce various kinds of static, printed scholarship, which is spread throughout the world by publishers. In today’s world,

mainstream scholarship still follows this scheme, with one essential change. In our fields, much is still printed, but digital versions of what has been printed have become equally important. In some cases, there no longer is a paper version. The now universal PDF format allows the spread of academic insights as email attachments, or via download from a repository. The latter can be organized by individual publishers or by an intermediary such as JSTOR (jstor.org), which provides access to material from a range of companies. Increasingly, however, the individual scholar's profile page on platforms such as Academia (academia.edu) and ResearchGate (researchgate.net) is the easiest way of accessing secondary literature. Monographs, which in many disciplines are a medium of the past except when making science more accessible to the general public, so far seem to have slipped through the net of the digital revolution. Although a move away from very specialized subjects can perhaps be noticed, they still stand strong in their printed form: for this type of publication, e-books have only very gradually been picking up momentum, and their future seems uncertain.

2.2.3 *Digitalization and Future Publishing Practice: The Example of papyri.info*

Despite their omnipresence, the digital publications of today are in a way outdated. They still take the printed version as their point of departure, just like the earliest incunables mimicked manuscripts. The possibilities offered – and even expected – by the new medium are not exploited. To begin with, PDFs are closed: it is difficult, if not impossible to interact digitally with the information provided. Often, the best that can be done is to link to the (outdated) article or book as a whole. In a digital world, where up-to-date information is often only a mouse-click away, this is somewhat unsatisfactory. Furthermore, as already stressed, PDFs are static and never change, not even if there are inaccuracies or errors. As such, they do not allow continuous updating or rapid correction of mistakes. Paradoxically, information that is only available online is still considered by many as secondary or even second-rate, despite the fact that it can be kept up-to-date easily. The evolution toward an academic environment in which scholars are assessed on the basis of their contributions to central places where knowledge can be found is only in its initial stages.

Nevertheless, important first steps have already been taken, particularly in the domain of digital text editing. The *Papyrological Navigator* (PN) for Greek (and other) documentary papyrological texts brings together the full text of the sources as collected by the DDbDP and their metadata (date, provenance, typology, ...) as curated by the *Heidelberger Gesamtverzeichnis der dokumentarischen Papyri* (HGV). But the *Integrating Digital Papyrology project* (Bagnall 2010) has added another very significant layer to the platform papyri.info: the *Papyrological Editor* (PE). This interface allows users to add new texts or metadata, or to propose changes in existing texts. The complexity of digital (and non-digital) text editing is enormous, and the underlying language used to deal with it is XML (Extensible Markup Language), in particular the so-called EPIDOC coding scheme, first developed for digital epigraphy (Bodard 2010). To maximize accessibility, however, the *Papyrological Editor* has developed a more user-friendly interface mimicking the traditional Leiden system of annotations and diacritical signs, appropriately called Leiden+ (Sosin 2010).

The ability to add or change would in itself have been important progress. But what is more relevant here is that all this works with a login system, and that all additions and changes are documented and peer-reviewed. Each change is vetted by a board of experts, and approved or rejected with a motivation. A full history of changes is stored and made accessible to the scholarly community. Papyri.info has thus taken an important first step toward the professionalization of digital text editing. Standard problems such as the lack of documentation for the editorial history and the absence of a peer-review process have been mended (Baumann 2013). What remains to be done is to convince evaluation committees and bibliometric instances that work on this platform is valuable and should be an important part of a papyrological scholar's curriculum.

Text editing is only one area where this kind of approach is possible. One can imagine a world where an encyclopedia is no longer static, but continuously updated in the light of new findings. In fact, such an encyclopedia already exists, and is even freely accessible: Wikipedia. Granted, it is not peer-reviewed, in the sense that changes have to be approved by editors before they are published, and in view of its philosophy it will probably never be so. This makes it vulnerable to abuse, and a less than ideal platform for scholarly disagreement. But it does attract very large audiences and remains the best place to reach the general public.

2.2.4 *The Move Toward (Linked) Open Data*

Both papyri.info and Wikipedia are open access. They are nonprofit projects whose main goal is the propagation of knowledge, as broadly as possible. Freely accessible for everyone with an Internet connection, they reach large communities of scholars and laypeople. Of course, costs are involved, but these are covered through funding by a university, a scholarly foundation, a public institution, or even the general public itself in the case of Wikipedia. In our field in particular, where almost all producers of knowledge are paid by public money, we should aim at providing free access to the results of our research, and funding agencies are justified in increasingly demanding this (UK Research Council online). Universities should do more, therefore, to assist scholars in their digital coming of age, in various ways. They should help in setting up websites; they should credit digital work; they should be more open to new publishing forms, such as blogs and databases; and they should encourage or even compel their researchers to make their data and final results available as Open Data, free for all to use and reuse (Blackwell and Crane 2009). Open Data are an essential prerequisite for a long-held dream: that of a smart Internet through Linked Open Data (Berners-Lee online; LAWDI online).

To describe what this would be, let us first describe the current situation. In order to reach new insights, scholars collect data from scattered sources. But this information is often imprecise or impressionistic. References to the entities themselves can be unclear: different people have the same names, and the same texts may have different labels. Further, what is said about the entities is not standardized: when a text is allegedly modeled on another one, it can mean that it is a literal copy, or that it is merely inspired by it. Databases and websites may be available on the Internet and even linked to other sites, but the connections are formal only. Human effort still has to be made to assemble the information in these digital silos, and there is no real digital understanding. Computers cannot themselves

suggest interesting avenues through which to gather extra information, potentially resulting in something new.

So, how do Linked Data (Heath and Bizer 2011) hope to change this? The basic idea is background standardization. As a first step, stable identifiers for entities are designed in gazetteer databases. The various Trismegistos databases, for example, aim to collect all instances of a specific type of information and assign them unique identifiers (trismegistos.org). Take a bilingual document from the archive of Dryton, a Greek officer living in the Egyptian countryside (Vandorpe 2002a; Chapter 25), identified by Greek papyrologists as P. Dryton 48 (referring to the publication number of the text's edition) and by Demotic scholars generally as P. Cairo 10 343 (using the inventory number of the museum where it is preserved). In some publications, this text is described as coming from Pathyris, while in others it is said to originate from Gebelein, or even Gebelayn. For experts, this "confusion of tongues" is no problem, and they know that in both cases the designations refer to the same entities: document and place of provenance, respectively. Lay people may find this more problematic, but at least they will have no problems with the variation between "P.Dryton 48" and "P. Dryton 48." But computers have a hard time even with this kind of very minor variation. They prefer plain, unambiguous numbers or other apparently meaningless strings of characters. So what Trismegistos does is assign serial numbers to all of these entities, and, as part of a Web address, make them available as part of a Universal Resource Identifier (URI), usable in a Linked Data setup. Thus, the archive of Dryton (TM Arch 74) becomes <http://www.trismegistos.org/archive/74>, the village of Pathyris (TM Geo 1628) <http://www.trismegistos.org/place/1628>, and the document itself (TM 357) <http://www.trismegistos.org/text/357>. This makes it easier to refer to the entities and to the information about them on Trismegistos, at least in a digital context (see https://www.trismegistos.org/about_how_to_cite for more details).

But it is possible to go a step further, and try to standardize not only the entities themselves, but also the relations between them. Collections of various types of relations are called ontologies. Thus, the connection between a text (TM 357) and the place where it was discovered (TM Geo 1628) becomes unambiguous when described as a property/predicate (e.g. "lawd:foundAT") using the *Linking Ancient World Data* ontology. This relation is described in the form of a subject–predicate–object relation, or "triple." When information such as this is made public in the so-called *Resource Description Framework* (RDF) format, the Internet – or, rather, the computers that constitute it – can start to put two and two together, without the assistance of humans. Users can then define from which source they prefer to pull certain types of information through (semi-)automated updates, on the basis of standardized relations between standardized entities. An early form of this is the constellation of *Pleiades* and *Pelagios* for geographical entities (Pleiades online; Pelagios online). While the former focuses on a gazetteer of places and their names, the latter connects projects on the basis of occurrences of gazetteer URI's, not only of Pleiades, but also of other sources such as Trismegistos. For people, the *SNAP* project (SNAP online) aims to do something similar, bringing together various prosopographical projects.

Through projects and initiatives like these, our scholarly knowledge of Egypt and the ancient world in general will gradually become accessible online, in the most connected and standardized way possible. *Optical Character Recognition* (OCR) will be of invaluable

assistance in scanning new material, although not all of the problems with recognizing and converting non-Latin scripts to Unicode seem to have been solved as yet (White 2012). Once a computer-readable text is available, however, *Named Entity Recognition* (NER) can automate the distillation of information of various types (publications, places, people, ...), allowing it to be stored in external (graph) databases or in the XML annotating the text itself (see e.g. Broux and Depauw 2015). Once the bulk of scholarship is available in this way, we will enter a completely new world, in which information can be drawn in live from other sources, and in which a computer can make sense of the connections between different entities: a smart Internet. This still seems light-years away in our fields, but one day it may well be realized. In fact, what it could be like is illustrated by the KU Leuven Fayum project, which attempted something similar in the Trismegistos microcosm (*avant la lettre*, because TM had not yet been created). The article on Alexandrou Nesos (TM Fayum online), for example, provides many links to individual texts, but is also connected “live” to the database for actual figures (e.g. for the number of texts). Unfortunately, many of the links have now gone dead because of changes in the database structure: another reason why stable identifiers will be crucial in future attempts along this path.

2.2.5 *Quantification, Visualization, and Objectivisation*

As a result of all these digital developments, it has become easier than ever to quantify evolutions and to provide real figures instead of impressions. In the past, such an approach was very time-consuming, because of all the counting involved. There were therefore only relatively few studies, which were received very critically by more “conservative” scholars (see Bagnall 1995, pp. 73–89). Even today, the response of the scholarly community is often critical, as recent examples illustrate (Depauw and Clarysse 2013, 2015; Frankfurter 2014). Of course, each figure should be interpreted very carefully in order to decide what information can be distilled from it: the sources from the ancient world are as a rule not randomized, do not have a normal distribution, and are for many reasons far from the ideal sample material. Statistical results should therefore always be put in context, and one should be careful with extrapolations. Nevertheless, if it is possible to count instead of using impressionistic terms such as “frequently,” “regularly,” “sometimes,” or “rarely,” why would it then be inadvisable to provide percentages or precise figures? When evolutions can be sketched in more detail than just “gradually,” or the age structure of the population of Roman Egypt can be defined more precisely (Scheidel 2012), a graph can be worth a thousand words. Admittedly, there are problems, as so many texts are not precisely dated, and editors sometimes neglect to specify chronological ranges they consider self-evident – which they often are not to outsiders. Yet, even imprecisely dated texts can be visually represented (e.g. in “weighed dates” graphs) (Van Beek and Depauw 2013).

Another way in which information can be visually represented and quantified is by (*Social*) *Network Analysis* (SNA). Developed in the 1960s in mathematics, anthropology, and sociology to measure structural forms of relations between individuals, network analysis has found its way to the history of Greco-Roman and Late Antique Egypt (Ruffini 2008; Cline 2012). The approach is also being applied to other than human relations (e.g. combinations of names, Broux 2015a, or even epistolary formulae, Dogaer and Depauw 2017).

Finally, maps and localization have also become much more mainstream. By putting things on a (normally digital) map, a website such as orbis.org can now visualize the time and costs involved in traveling in the Roman world, including Egypt.

Surely, there will soon be new developments, coming in from other fields. *Computational Modeling* and *Complex Adaptive Systems* are already applied in archeology outside Egypt (e.g. Poblome 2015; Brughmans and Poblome 2016), and *Social Sequence Analysis* is an interesting new approach to the study of changes over time (Cornwell 2015).

The growing influence of quantitative methods has been mirrored in other facets of the move toward a modern, more objective scholarship. Technological advances in the study of material remains have opened up new avenues in the study of human life and its environment, as well as better ways to date developments (Zakrzewski et al. 2016). At the same time, the traditional “intuitive” philological and factual-historical approaches are under pressure, and various concepts from philosophy and sociology (e.g. ethnicity, identity, network, people’s history) have come to the foreground (e.g. Monson 2012b). Especially in the field of economic studies, terms such as “New Institutional Economics,” “Economic Sociology,” and even “Game Theory” are at the core of current research (Manning and Morris 2005; Manning 2010; Erdkamp and Verboven 2015). Mathematical models like the rank–size rule are used to explain the development of settlement systems (Obluski 2014). More and more scholars are also aware of the relativity of their standpoint and trying to objectivize the fundamentals of the theoretical concepts they employ (e.g. Alston 2002, pp. 4–43).

2.3 The Impact of Digitalization: Archeological Sources

2.3.1 *The Impact on Heuristic Approaches in the Archeology of Greco-Roman and Late Antique Egypt*

The computer is nowadays an indispensable tool in archeology, and digital techniques have entered virtually every aspect of excavation work. Field notes and drawings, although still mostly done by hand, are digitalized using computer graphics programs. The drawing of plans and site mapping are carried out with the aid of – or even solely using – computer technology, with instruments like the *Total Station* coupled with computer-aided design (CAD) systems. Increasingly informative and efficient surveys and site-mapping projects are conducted thanks to the use of aerial photography and photogrammetry (Bitelli et al. 2003), GPS-RTK, GIS, and *Google Earth* imaging (Blue 2011). The employment of non-invasive remote-sensing techniques like magnetic prospection and geo-electrical resistivity mapping offers the possibility to see underground. “Sandwiching” the results of various research methods and analyses produces a complex picture of extant relics permitting the potential of a given area to be assessed even before any actual digging is done (Herbich 2012).

Computational methods have also changed the approach to collecting artifacts. Archeology is a destructive research discipline, and therefore emphasis has long been placed on recording as much as possible. Archeologists have to maintain objectivity, taking care not to squander the archeological resource, but must also work in an efficient manner.

While the collection of *all* material would contribute to the objectivity of the research and the preservation of the evidence, it is the time-, labor- and cost-efficiency of such a policy that tends to pose a problem. Collected finds of all categories, which sometimes can be counted in the hundreds of thousands, must be processed and documented, and more often than not require specialized drawing by hand. All these tasks are labor-intensive, time-consuming, and as yet impossible to automate. The archeologist must establish an efficient, systematic, structured system of finds collection and documentation, and a sampling strategy that does not lead to impossible workloads and unmanageable storage. Thanks to digital storage and tools for working with large datasets, however, archeologists can afford more inclusive finds-collection policies. Databases enable the management and statistical analysis of enormous datasets comprising hundreds of thousands of small finds. Records of mass material, such as nondiagnostic fragments of utilitarian wares and glass or of undecorated plaster, can be made for statistical purposes even if the material itself is not stored for future studies.

The advent of digital photography revolutionized field documentation. Prior restraints like development costs and storage space limits no longer apply. It might seem the documentarist's dream has come true: the number of documentation images (including photogrammetry, 3D models, etc.) of every single object and feature can now be infinite, at least in theory. New imaging technologies do not replace drawings, but complement them by providing a superbly detailed and objective reference for further study. Their use, however, has led to an unprecedented inflation of field documentation, and this abundance has its perils. Generating digital images is relatively cheap, quick, and easy, but it takes time and effort to maintain order in the mass of photographic documentation and to provide a framework for its ever-increasing bulk. The solution lies in well-structured databases and plentiful disk (server) space, on which to store field documentation, organize the data, and, ultimately, keep things manageable and accessible.

2.3.2 *The Output of Archeology: Publish Online or Perish?*

The possibilities unfolding before an archeologist in the digital age have changed the way we think about the publication process. Traditionally, reports from excavation seasons were published yearly or every few years in journals, and a given project terminated with a final monograph. Reports and monographic volumes appearing in paper form demanded certain sacrifices on the part of the archeologists. Only a fraction of the documentation could be included in the printed work, and one had to choose what to include and what to leave out. Pictures of common finds or structures of lesser importance were only briefly included, and their documentation was eventually laid to rest in a seldom-visited archive. Finally, even in the age of color photography, the printing of a catalog volume entirely in color was difficult for financial reasons. The appearance of digital formats freed archeologists from such constraints. Color catalogs of any length can be published online and the selection of presented images can be driven by scientific rather than technical concerns. An example of a digital publication series featuring abundant images of material from the Nile Valley is the *British Museum Studies in Ancient Egypt and Sudan* series, which also revisits material and documentation from past excavations (e.g. Thomas and Villing 2013; O'Connell 2014).

There is growing pressure toward open-access publication of archeological fieldwork. Most excavations are publicly funded and therefore morally or formally obliged to present their output to the general public in free and openly accessible form. Several traditional journals (*Bulletin de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale* (BIFAO), *Polish Archaeology in the Mediterranean* (PAM), *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* (JARCE), *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* (JEA)) provide free online access to archeological reports on excavations of Greco-Roman sites in Egypt, facilitating dissemination of results. The reports are scattered across journals that report on the activities of various institutions (*American Research Center in Egypt* (ARCE), *Deutsches Archäologisches Institut* (DAI), *Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale* (IFAO), *The Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology* (PCMA)) or have a broader chronological and geographical focus (*Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* (JEA), *Journal of Roman Archaeology* (JRA)). The *Ancient World Online* (ancientworldonline.blogspot.com) blog keeps a list of open-access journals in ancient studies, including archeology, but no dedicated digital tools have yet been created to facilitate access to new archeological data on Greco-Roman and Late Antique Egypt. A number of journals important for archeological research (mainly those issued by major commercial publishers) are available online, but access is by payment or subscription only. Others remain unavailable in digital form. Digital bulletin formats are also used for more concise reports on excavation activity (e.g. DAI e-Forschungsberichte).

However, publication in the digital age is not only about putting a PDF online. The change toward open access can go much further, with online archives and data stored in repositories. Such archives, hosted by reliable institutions and labeled with stable identifiers, render all collected data available to the reader (e.g. Rowley-Conwy 2012). The benefits are twofold: the researcher no longer has to choose what to include and what to omit, and the fact that research results and conclusions can be easily verified by the reader contributes to the objectivity and scientific value of the archeological publication.

Archeological datasets available online – an outcome of the research of individuals, teams, and institutions – form a large yet fragmented corpus (e.g. *Online Cultural and Historical Research Environment* (ochre.pk), *Archaeology Data Service Online* (archaeologydataservice.ac.uk)). Metadata registries like *ARIADNE* (ariadne.ac.uk) were designed to integrate the archeological research-data infrastructures, essentially working as search engines. Browsing them, however, one finds few datasets generated by research on Greco-Roman and Late Antique Egypt. While open-access repositories are increasingly common in other parts of the archeological *oikumene*, in Egypt they have been slow to take root. Some sites are more present in the digital realm than others. For instance, a database for Amheida (amheida.org) was made available by the Institute for the Study of the Ancient World, NYU. Some Amheida publications (e.g. Bagnall and Ruffini 2012) and preliminary reports are also available online.

The reasons for archeologists' reluctance to embrace the open-access policy are twofold. The first is an unwillingness to give access to images of unpublished material for fear of unauthorized use and publication. Since most excavation projects take many years to complete, the excavated material may remain inaccessible for decades, awaiting final publication. The second issue lies in the nature of the data. Excavations generate a tremendous amount of material, and even when information is recorded and processed systematically, it requires corrections and additions. That an internal project database is a

work in progress needs no explanation. Bringing such a database to publicly accessible form, however, requires particular effort and care. Data made available to researchers outside the project must be provided with proper metadata and rendered as error-free and final as possible. After all, the quality of any potential conclusions is contingent on the quality of the primary data.

Finally, publication for the wider audience has witnessed some changes with the advent of the digital age. Archeologists have at their disposal new ways of presenting their sites to the general public, such as 3D reconstructions of monuments and virtual tours (e.g. *Nubian Monasteries Project*, nubianmonasteries.uw.edu.pl). Such evocative tools for education and promotion give a new and greater power to images, but also offer fresh perspectives on the spatial characteristics, ambient light, and architectural form of ancient buildings (Karelin 2011). However, they are not without their pitfalls, as the thin line between scientifically justified reconstruction and groundless fiction can easily be crossed (Van Gool et al. 2004).

2.3.3 A Closer Look at Finds: Pushing Back the Boundaries of Specializations

A vital element of archeological research is the study of finds. Technological progress has allowed this study to go deeper, to extend the boundaries of specializations, and to seek answers to new questions. The primary goal of studying archeological finds is to reconstruct the life of past societies. Archeologists go beyond building typologies and amassing collections of objects and goods. They seek to understand the immaterial factors behind the creation and use of objects and to trace patterns of continuity and change in production and trade.

Modern research on archeological finds enables materials to be subjected to investigations using different analytical techniques in order to learn more about their material, technology, and provenance (Zakrzewski et al. 2016). The advantage of such analyses is that they provide scientifically measurable and comparable data linking an artifact to a particular source, production site, or chronological period. Provenance determination helps answer questions about economic matters such as mining and quarrying sites or trade and craftsmanship, but also contributes important data on social aspects: the standard of living, subsistence strategies, and social stratification.

The collection and analysis of scientific data requires specialized equipment and know-how. Researchers studying particular categories of finds need to work with laboratory scientists, and they must understand their methods in order to know what can be gained by their application. On Greco-Roman sites in Egypt, the use of the microscope and other portable instruments (e.g. X-ray fluorescence (XRF) analyzers) has gained popularity, but most analyses can only be performed in a laboratory. A ban on taking samples out of Egypt, combined with a shortage of state-of-the-art equipment locally, has led to a notable paucity of laboratory data on finds from Greco-Roman sites. However, this situation is slowly changing, and some analyses are undertaken within the cadre of excavation projects (see e.g. Pichot and Boussac 2014; Mahmoud et al. 2011).

Pottery, no longer perceived only as a means of dating archeological contexts, has been receiving increased attention as a potential source of information on daily life, trade, and

technology. Important data regarding the use and function of vessels can be obtained from the archeological context and the morphological and technological characteristics of the vessel, as well as from analytical-chemical studies of residues and organic material. In turn, thin-section and elemental analyses provide information on provenance. Detailed chronologies and typologies have been developed for ceramics from other regions of the Greco-Roman world. Research on amphorae from Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt is in progress (see e.g. Centre Alexandrin d'Étude des Amphores online). Archeometric analyses (using physical, chemical, or mathematical procedures for archeological data and artifacts), however, are virtually lacking. This may change with the completion of the French-German project, *CeramEgypt – Pottery Production and Consumption in Ptolemaic-Roman Egypt*, launched in 2015. The plan is to conduct exhaustive physicochemical and petrographic analyses, and ultimately to produce a comprehensive atlas of Egyptian ceramics (for progress, see Marchand 2014).

The study of other categories of finds has also benefitted from the introduction of analytical methods. Broad-scope archeometric research on glass-making in the Greco-Roman world has given a wider Mediterranean context to the Egyptian glass industry and commerce (Degryse 2014; Nenna 2014). Studies on workshops, production techniques, and the distribution of glass in Roman and Late Antique Egypt have been running for more than a decade (Nenna 2007; Picon et al. 2008). Analyses of assemblages of glass finds from excavations, however, are still few (e.g. Rosenow and Rehren 2014; Then-Obłuska and Dussubieux 2016).

The application of stable isotopic analyses in physical anthropology has opened new possibilities for learning about the diet, living conditions, and daily life of ancient populations. Variations in nitrogen, oxygen, and carbon isotope values in bone collagen are the result of differences in diet, for instance consumption of specific plants or subsistence on terrestrial or marine diets. At the Roman-Christian Kellis 2 cemetery in the Dakhla Oasis, stable isotopic analysis was used to explore dietary habits (Dupras and Tocheri 2007) and to determine the seasonal diet at the time of death. In combination with burial alignment, this allows questions of the seasonality of conception and birth to be addressed, and even for this seasonality to be linked to social and religious factors (Dupras et al. 2015).

The main focus in the study of visual arts is no longer on the subjective criterion of esthetic value, but rather technology and composition. Production technologies and materials are investigated using X-ray diffraction (XRD), energy dispersive X-ray analysis (EDS), scanning electron microscopy (SEM), and Fourier transform infrared spectroscopy (FTIR) techniques. Wall paintings, once approached from an art-historical perspective, are now also the focus of analyses of the materials and technologies used by the artists (Mahmoud et al. 2012; Abd Elrehim et al. 2015). Pigments and binding media used on mummy cartonnages from the Greco-Roman Period are another object of study (Afifi 2011), while petrographic analyses of decorative stone used in sculptures and architectural details bring new data on long-distance trade and the sources of these materials (Harrell 2013).

The implementation of new analytical methods in archeological studies also gives us a chance to revisit objects that were excavated in Egypt long ago but are now housed in museums. For instance, Greco-Roman faience has been subjected to analyses at the Louvre (Kaczmarczyk and Nenna 2014), and research has been carried out on the pigments of

painted portraits and panels from Tebtynis at the Phoebe A. Hearst Museum of Anthropology at UC Berkeley (Ganio et al. 2015). There is increased emphasis on in-depth studies of perishables. For instance, research on textile manufacturing techniques and the publication of new radiocarbon dates are among the objectives of the *Textiles from the Nile Valley* research group (De Moor et al. 2015; see also Box 17.1). Scientists at the Vitelli Institute in Florence have determined the ancient content of oil lamps and jars by conducting multi-analytical chemical studies of organic and inorganic residues (Colombini et al. 2005; Copley et al. 2005; Ribechini et al. 2009). The identification of radish oil remains in lamps from the sixth–seventh centuries and of the remains of fish sauce in an amphora from Antinoopolis offers new, much-needed data for economic studies, for example – data no less important for its scarcity.

Most of the analytical methods mentioned here are used in order to answer questions being asked within the cadre of specific research projects. Archeology is the vital starting point for all such research, because it is at the dig that objects are collected and stored. It is the director of the archeological project who is usually responsible for obtaining permissions and for going through the often lengthy and complicated procedures needed to allow their transport to the chosen lab. Finally, it is also the director who organizes funding for the analyses. Such analyses are therefore usually not considered standard procedure at excavations, for they entail increased cost and effort on the part of archeologists. On the other hand, without this closer, deeper look at finds, archeology would be reduced to being art history’s poor cousin. Perhaps, in time, more analyses will become a part of excavation policy. Published archeometric data change the way we think about the material remains found at excavations and lead to new questions. The more data become available, the greater the possibilities.

Archeology in the digital age is not, ultimately, just about building bigger and better databases or dazzling reconstructions and digital models. It is also about seeking new ways to solve problems and giving more accurate answers to questions both old and new. Its goals of objectivity, efficiency, and the preservation of evidence are ever the same, but new tools can take archeologists a step closer to reaching them. However, it is true multidisciplinary – achievable thanks to new technological possibilities – that creates a new quality in research and makes archeology a historical science *par excellence*.

2.4 Conclusion: A Bright Future

The advent of the computer has been very gradual in the study of Greco-Roman and Late Antique Egypt. Few scholars in the 1980s would have imagined the pivotal role it would play today. A digital environment has stimulated and accelerated the movement toward interdisciplinarity, making access to (extra-disciplinary) information so much easier. Quantification of the evidence and compelling visualizations are increasingly available even to those with little training in information technology. Technological aids and greater attention for theoretical models have made scholars’ judgments more objective, as well. New publication methods and the development of computer-friendly standards for information will no doubt further overhaul scholarship. We live in interesting times: the future is digital and in constant flux, but it is bright (see Chapter 39).

FURTHER READING

The ebooks by Reggiani (2017, 2018) discuss methods, tools, trends, and case studies in digital papyrology. Zakrzewski et al. (2016) demonstrate the potential of scientific archaeology for the discipline of Egyptology. Trismegistos and Papyri.info are portals for textual sources, while the metadata registry ARIADNE is a portal for existing archeological research data infrastructures. See also the list of digital resources at the end of the volume and Chapter 39 on the future of digital scholarship.

PART II

**EGYPT AS PART OF
A GLOBALIZING WORLD**

CHAPTER THREE

The Last Pharaohs: The Ptolemaic Dynasty and the Hellenistic World

Anne-Emmanuelle Veisse

3.1 Ptolemy I and the Foundation of the Ptolemaic Dynasty (323–305/4 BC)

We do not know Ptolemy's first impression of Egypt when he entered the country following Alexander the Great in the autumn of 332 BC. If it was ever included in his *Memoir*, it was not transmitted. Undoubtedly, it was strong enough that he was given the government of the country during the Settlement of Babylon that followed the premature death of the Conqueror on June 11, 323 BC. Ptolemy son of Lagus belonged to a Macedonian family of minor nobility that was distantly related, on the maternal side, to the royal Argead family. At the end of Philip II's reign, he was one of those who were sent into exile due to their loyalty to Alexander during the dispute between father and son. He then took an active part in the *Anabasis*, was integrated in 330 to the narrow circle of the *somatophylakes* (the "bodyguards" of the king), and won renown during the campaigns in East Iran and India. However, he does not seem to have played a leading role in these campaigns, and he did not have the same political weight as men such as Hephaestion (who died in 324), Perdiccas, Craterus, or even Antipater, who was left behind by Alexander to run Macedonia and watch over Greece. After the death of the king, the latter three received the task of ruling the empire in the name of Alexander's two official heirs: his mentally deficient half-brother Philip III Arrhidaeus and his posthumous son Alexander IV, born to the Iranian princess Roxana. Antipater's duties in Europe were confirmed, Perdiccas was designated *chiliarch* ("commander over a thousand") in Asia – a responsibility that gave him authority over the different satraps of the area – and Craterus received the title of *prostates* or "protector," as representative of the kings. As for Ptolemy, he was one of the beneficiaries of the distribution of satrapies. But this distribution turned out to be of

more historical importance than that of the central powers, because this is when the seeds of the Hellenistic kingdoms were sown (Will 1979: I, p. 24).

The satrapy Ptolemy obtained in Babylon had been under Macedonian control for about 10 years. Alexander had left behind two nomarchs, several Macedonian troop commanders, and a powerful financial intendant, the Greek Cleomenes of Naucratis – possibly because he thought it unsafe to entrust such a rich and relatively defensible country to a single person (Arrian, *Anabasis* 3.5.7). Ptolemy established his residence in Memphis, the old pharaonic capital and capital of the Persian satrapy of Egypt, rather than Alexandria, which was no more than a huge construction site at the time. His relationship with Cleomenes quickly became problematic. The latter had been placed under the authority of the new satrap by the Settlement of Babylon, but Ptolemy suspected him of being Perdiccas' eyes and ears (Pausanias 1.6.3). Taking advantage of the intendant's unpopularity, he put the man to death. Then, in 320, he stopped Perdiccas himself, who had undertaken to rein in the satraps who were reluctant to accept his authority: blocked in front of Memphis, the *chiliarch* was assassinated by his own officers. Almost at the same time, Craterus disappeared in battle against Eumenes of Cardia, Perdiccas' last ally. Of the original three main characters of the Settlement of Babylon, only one survived – Antipater – and a new conference had to be organized in Triparadisus. The unity of the empire was still officially maintained, but in fact this settlement heralded only an era of fiercer conflicts between the Diadochs, Alexander's successors. If what Diodorus says is true, Ptolemy himself would have been in a position "to assume the guardianship of the kings" after the death of Perdiccas – but he chose not to take the opportunity (Diodorus Siculus 18.36.6), and at Triparadisus his position as satrap of Egypt was confirmed. Nevertheless, it is far from certain that Ptolemy really had the opportunity to become guardian of the kings (Roisman 2014, pp. 470–471). Similarly, there is no evidence that he was, from the beginning, a "separatist," and that his real ambitions, like those of his main rivals, were not to reign one day over Alexander's entire empire (Meeus 2014; Hauben 2014, pp. 257–259).

As early as 322/1 BC, Ptolemy had gained domination over Cyrenaica, interfering in conflicts between the Greek cities of the region and being appointed *strategos* for life in the constitution of Cyrene. The Settlement of Triparadisus' participants took this into account by acknowledging his authority over – in addition to Egypt – "Libya and the vast territory beyond" (Arrian, *FGH* 156 F34). Around the same time, Ptolemy established diplomatic relations with the kings of the *poleis* of Cyprus, and in 319 he invaded the satrapy of Syria-Phoenicia.

On the domestic front, Ptolemy ensured the development of Alexandria, gradually transforming Alexander's foundation from a construction site – whence its Egyptian name of Rhakotis (*R^c-qd*, "Construction site"; Chauveau 1999) – to a Mediterranean megapolis. Somewhere before 311, it became the new capital of Egypt and the official residence of the royal family. He also laid out the basis for a new administration, introduced the cleruchic system, and established good relations with the Egyptian clergy.

However, Ptolemy ruled for 18 long years without assuming a royal title. From 323 to 317 BC, he was officially only satrap, under the nominal authority of Philip III and Alexander IV, and then of Alexander alone after Philip's assassination in 317. In the year 310, documents in Egypt were still dated according to the regnal years of Alexander's

son, as shown by the famous marriage contract of Elephantine, one of the rare Greek papyri from the reign of the first Ptolemy (P.Eleph. 1). But in the same document, the ambiguity of Egypt's political status is also illustrated by the use of a second date, referring to the years of the satrap Ptolemy: "in the seventh year of the reign of Alexander son of Alexander; in the fourteenth year of the satrapship of Ptolemy." In 310/09, the assassination of Alexander IV by Cassander, the ruler of Macedonia, made Ptolemy a de facto independent satrap. He waited another five years before assuming the royal diadem, however. In this, he followed the example of Antigonus the One-Eyed, who himself had taken advantage of his great victory over the Ptolemaic fleet at Salamis in 306 to be proclaimed king (*basileus*) by his army. On the Ptolemaic side, this step was taken during the year 305/4 – the exact date is still debated – after which he retro-dated his regnal years to 323 (Caneva 2016).

The new dynasty that then arose in Egypt revealed itself to be the longest-lasting of those born from the dismantling of Alexander's empire: for approximately three centuries, Egypt would be ruled by the descendants of Ptolemy I. One of the most striking features of these rulers is certainly the fact that they were "double-faced" (Heinen 1978, p. 185). On the one hand, the Ptolemies were Hellenistic kings like any other. They emphasized their Macedonian origin in the context of pan-Hellenic games (Fantuzzi 2005; Thompson 2005; see Box 3.1) and they "liked to be called Macedonians as in fact they were" (Pausanias 10.7.8). Regarding royal ideology and government practice, they shared many common points with their Antigonid, Seleucid, and later Attalid counterparts. On the other hand, they also adopted many of the ancient pharaonic institutions (Manning 2010) and presented themselves as traditional pharaohs to their Egyptian subjects.

3.2 The Legitimization of Power: The Ptolemies as Hellenistic Kings and as Pharaohs

The Greco-Macedonian face of Ptolemaic power is clearly manifested in the royal ideology primarily directed at the "Hellenes" of Egypt – namely, the Greeks, the Macedonians, and the Hellenized immigrants, who represented 5% or more of the total population (compare Chapter 19) and who were, especially at first, the most fierce supporters of the throne. At the time of Ptolemy I, the claim of a privileged link to Alexander the Great formed the cornerstone of the process of legitimization. All the Diadochs, indeed, were self-made men, who were committed to assert themselves as Alexander's successors in order to justify their seizure of power. Like many of them, Ptolemy I minted a series of coins with the portrait of Alexander and tried to bind himself to the Argead family through a projected marriage with Cleopatra, the only full sister of the Conqueror (Meeus 2009). Nevertheless, in this legitimacy race, Ptolemy gained a significant advantage over his competitors by appropriating Alexander's corpse in 321, when the sumptuous funeral cortege that had left Babylon passed through Damascus. Was its final destination the royal necropolis of Aegae, in Macedonia, or the oasis of Siwa, the place where Alexander had been recognized as the son of Zeus-Ammon in 331 (Pausanias 1.6.3 *contra* Diodorus Siculus 18.3.5)? The fact remains that Ptolemy, through force or persuasion, intercepted the burial convoy – which was probably one of the triggers of the war with Perdiccas. He brought Alexander's

Box 3.1 Ptolemaic Royals and Olympic and Other Greek Games.

by Katelijn Vandorpe and Sophie Remijsen

The Ptolemies stressed their Greek identity in the Hellenistic world by taking part in the most prestigious events of the pan-Hellenic games (chariot races), by instituting new games in Alexandria to which Greeks from other regions were invited, and by building new sports infrastructure. We are well informed about the early Ptolemaic interest in sports thanks to the collection of Hellenistic epigrams attributed to Posidippus of Pella. The section “On Equestrian Victories” (*Hippika*), for instance, gathers 18 epigrams for victors of chariot and horse races (Remijsen 2009).

Ptolemaic royals at the pan-Hellenic and other games of the Greek world

<i>Date BC</i>	<i>Games</i>	<i>Contest</i>	<i>Victors</i>
314	Pythian	Two-horse chariot race for foals	Ptolemy I
308/7	Arcadian Lykaia	Two-horse chariot race	Lagus, son of Ptolemy I
308–292	Olympic	Four-horse chariot race	Ptolemy I
304–288	Olympic	Four-horse chariot race	Berenice I, wife of Ptolemy I
284, 280, or 276	Olympic	Four-horse chariot race	Ptolemy II
272	Olympic	All chariot races	Arsinoe II, wife of Ptolemy II
268	Olympic	Four-horse chariot race for foals	Belistiche, mistress of Ptolemy II
264	Olympic	Two-horse chariot race for foals	Belistiche
c. 260	Isthmian	“Victorious many times” in chariot races	Princess Berenice, daughter of Ptolemy II
c. 260	Nemean	All chariot races	Princess Berenice
260–252	Olympic	Four-horse chariot race	Princess Berenice
245–241	Nemean	?	Berenice II, wife of Ptolemy III
Second century	Panathenaic	Equestrian races	Ptolemy V and VI

Ptolemaic royals instituting new Greek games

<i>Founder</i>	<i>Games or infrastructure</i>	<i>Details</i>
Alexander and Ptolemy I	Basileia	Annual, on Ptolemy’s official birthday = day of Alexander’s coronation. For Alexander’s coronation, once in Memphis. Later reinstituted by Ptolemy II in Alexandria
Ptolemy I	Lageion, a hippodrome	In Alexandria, near the Serapeum
Ptolemy II	Ptolemaia	Every four years, in honor of Ptolemy I, with isolympic status (victors are entitled to the same rewards as those in the Olympic games), taking place in HieraNesos near Alexandria

Founder	Games or infrastructure	Details
Ptolemy II	Theadelphia	Every four years, in honor of the Sibling Gods (Ptolemy II and Arsinoe II), held after the Ptolemaia in Alexandria
Ptolemy II	Arsinoeia	Annual, in honor of Arsinoe II, in Alexandria
Ptolemy II	Dionysia	In honor of his dynasty's patron god, in Alexandria
? Ptolemy II	Pentaeteris	Every four years, in the center of Alexandria, in mid-winter, sometimes identified with the Ptolemaia
Ptolemy III		Grants contest for artists in Ptolemais

remains to Memphis and buried them according to Macedonian rites. Later, he transferred the body to Alexandria, placing it in a newly built tomb, the *Sema* or *Soma*. There, Alexander received a double cult: a civic cult as founder of the city and, from around 290, a royal cult, for which the first appointed priest was no less than Ptolemy's brother, Menelaus son of Lagus. Furthermore, alone among the Diadochs, Ptolemy took on the role of Alexander's historiographer by virtue of his *Memoir*, which later was to be the main source for Arrian's *Anabasis of Alexander* (Bingen 2007a, pp. 20–23).

After Ptolemy's reign, once the power of the dynasty was well established, reference to Alexander occupied a less prominent role in the legitimizing discourse of the kings. Ptolemy II emphasized dynastic continuity and, after his marriage with his full sister Arsinoe II, he introduced the theme of marital harmony (Caneva 2016). He also elevated his deceased parents, Ptolemy I and Berenice I, to the rank of "Savior Gods" (*Theoi Soteres*) around 279 BC. Then, around 272/1, he created the cult of the "Brother-Sister Gods" (*Theoi Adelphoi*), in which he was associated with Arsinoe II. Thereafter, all the Ptolemaic kings and queens received a cult during their lifetime and after their death. This Greek ruler cult was headed by an eponymous priest, who was also in charge of Alexander's cult and whose name was recorded in the dating formulae of the Greek and Demotic legal documents throughout the country ("In the reign of Ptolemy... the priest of Alexander and the Ptolemies being..."). Some of the priestesses of the queens enjoyed the same privilege, such as the *kanephoros* of Arsinoe II and the *athlophoros* of Berenice II. The priests and priestesses who exercised these priesthoods belonged to the most prominent Hellenic families, which also provided government dignitaries (on the ruler cult, see Chapter 27).

The royal epithets, fixed by the cult and widely distributed through official dating formulae, express different aspects of the royal ideology. Some underline the divine nature of the kings, like "Savior" (*Soter*, Ptolemy I), which is traditionally an epithet of Zeus, "Who Has Appeared" (*Epiphanes*, Ptolemy V), which evokes the manifestations of the gods, or even more explicitly, "New Dionysus" (*Neos Dionysos*, Ptolemy IV and XII). Others express the king's generosity, his nature of "Benefactor" (*Euergetes*, Ptolemy III and VIII). Still others highlight strong family ties: "Brother and Sister" (*Adelphoi*, Ptolemy II and Arsinoe II), "Who Loves his Father" (*Philopator*, Ptolemy IV, Cleopatra VII and her brothers), "Who Loves his Mother" (*Philometor*, Ptolemy VI, Ptolemy X). The emphasis on the unity of the dynasty is also shown by the systematic homonymy of the kings: from

Ptolemy I to Ptolemy XV, Cleopatra's son, 14 kings bore the same name – taking into consideration the fact that the king often named Ptolemy VII by modern tradition is probably a historiographical myth (Chauveau 1990, 2000a).

The royal ideology concerns the Ptolemaic queens as well, whose “closed onomastic repertory” contributed to the expression of dynastic continuity (Bingen 2007a, p. 61) and who could be endowed with royal qualities. These queens were associated with their husbands in the Greek ruler cult, and some of them were awarded a cult of their own, such as Arsinoe II after her death in 270 BC. Furthermore, many of them detained real power. The first was Cleopatra I, daughter of the Seleucid king Antiochus III: married to Ptolemy V around 193/2 as a reconciliation measure after the Fifth Syrian War, she ruled in association with her young son Ptolemy VI from 180 to 177/6 after the death of her husband (Bielman Sánchez and Lonzo 2015). In the second and first centuries, Cleopatra II and III, Cleopatra Berenice III, Berenice IV, and Cleopatra VII all exercised power, each to different extents (see Chapters 22 and 34).

The identity of these queens is also a matter of interest insofar as most of them are – and this is another striking feature of the Ptolemaic dynasty – the sibling sisters of their respective husbands. The first consanguine marriage was that of Ptolemy II and Arsinoe II between 279 and 272/1 (see also Chapter 34). The latter had previously been the wife of the Diadoch Lysimachus, and then of her half-brother Ptolemy Ceraunus, who reigned a short time in Macedonia. The new union did not lead to an heir: Ptolemy III, who succeeded Ptolemy II, was the son of the king and his first wife, Arsinoe I, even if he was later considered “Ptolemy, son of Ptolemy and Arsinoe, the Brother-Sister Gods” (i.e. Ptolemy II and Arsinoe II). He himself wed a distant cousin, Berenice II, daughter of King Magas of Cyrene. Nevertheless, from the reign of Ptolemy IV onward, nearly all kings married their sisters. The first sibling wedding of Ptolemy II and Arsinoe II caused a scandal among the Greeks, however, as shown by the obscene verses of the poet Sotades of Maroneia, who was put to death for writing them (Athenaeus 14.621.a-b). The reasons why Ptolemy II chose to overcome the Greek aversion to incest remain a matter of debate. Judging by Theocritus' Panegyric, the marriage was officially justified by comparing it with the “holy wedlock” (*hieros gamos*) of Zeus and Hera: “So too in heaven was the holy wedlock accomplished of those whom august Rhea bore to be rulers of Olympus” (Theocritus, *Idyll* 17.131–132; see Hazzard 2000, p. 89). Actually, the purpose of the marriage could well have been to clearly display the exceptionality of the kings (Ager 2005), in connection with their divinization. The sibling couple could also be assimilated to that of Osiris and Isis in the Egyptian context; nevertheless, only one Egyptian document contains such a comparison (Thiers 2007), and it is unlikely that the wedding was the consequence of an “Egyptian influence.” As for the Hellenes of Egypt, it seems that, once past the initial shock, they became rapidly and easily accustomed to this new royal tradition.

The Egyptian part of the population was not excluded from the various messages aimed at presenting the Ptolemies as ideal Greek kings (*basileis*). The coins were used by all the inhabitants of the country, and the dating formulae mentioning the royal epithets were also employed in Demotic contracts. But with the probable exception of the Hellenized elites, the Egyptians were not the main recipients of the Greek royal ideology. The Ptolemies legitimized their power in the eyes of the major part of the population by presenting

themselves as Egyptian pharaohs. This attitude was all but revolutionary when we consider that the Egyptians had a long tradition of recognizing the foreign masters of their country as such. This recognition was, naturally, important to gaining the consent of a population that, in the long run, the Ptolemies could not dominate by strength only. From the perspective of the Egyptian priests, who were at the center of the process of recognition, both religious and practical reasons must be taken into account. From a theological point of view, the presence of a pharaoh was a necessity for maintaining the universe's order, or *Maat*: without a pharaoh acting as intermediary between humanity and the gods, the world would fall into chaos. The pharaoh was also, *stricto sensu*, the only sacrificer in Egypt: in all the temples of the country, the priests performed their rituals through his delegation, so that it was, in a way, the pharaoh who justified their existence. On a more pragmatic level, it is obvious that, by legitimizing the authority of the new kings, the priests could maintain their own privileges and their position within Egyptian society. All this can explain why even the Persian kings, whose center of power remained far from Egypt, had been recognized as pharaohs. Alexander, too, acted as pharaoh upon his arrival in Memphis by sacrificing to the Egyptian gods (Arrian, *Anabasis* 3.1.4). Even if the Conqueror had not necessarily been officially crowned (Burstin 1991), Egyptian documents were dated according to his reign as "King of Upper and Lower Egypt," and he was depicted as a traditional pharaoh on temple walls decorated at his time (e.g. in Karnak and Luxor) (Schäfer 2007).

After Alexander's death, his official successors Philip III Arrhidaeus and Alexander IV were also recognized as pharaohs, even if they only passed through Egypt briefly together with Perdiccas' troops in 320 (Diodorus Siculus 18.29.1). During their official reign, Ptolemy held the actual power as satrap. The famous Satrap stele set up by the priests of Bouto in 311 (see Figure 34.1) illustrates this situation (Schäfer 2011; see Chapter 34). This Hieroglyphic document praises several actions recently undertaken by Ptolemy: he was successful in Syria against the Antigonid forces, he brought back to Egypt the sacred statues of the gods found in Asia, and, above all, he gave back to the main temple of Bouto, in the Delta, land that had been previously donated by Khabbabash, who had gained control of part of the country in 338–335. The stele is dated to the first of Thoth in the seventh year of the King of Upper and Lower Egypt Alexander IV (November 9, 311 BC), and Ptolemy is qualified as "satrap" and "great ruler" only. Nevertheless, the rounded upper portion maintains the ambiguity: in two parallel compositions, one can see a pharaoh represented in a traditional way making offerings to the gods of Bouto, but the royal cartouches are blank, which could reveal the difficulty the priests faced in depicting such a complex situation: the stele is devoted to celebrate Ptolemy for an attitude worthy of a pharaoh, but he is not a pharaoh and cannot be represented as such in an offering scene. Later, Ptolemy was recognized as pharaoh as well as Greek king (*basileus*), and so were his successors. Curiously, this aspect of Ptolemaic kingship does not seem to have interested Greek authors such as Polybius, Diodorus, or even Theocritus. Yet, it is well documented by both texts and iconography on the Egyptian side. The names of the Ptolemaic kings, associated with the traditional pharaonic titulature, were indeed written on the walls of the Egyptian temples built or decorated during their reigns, and the kings themselves were depicted according to the canons of Egyptian art, performing pharaonic functions. This respect for the manifestations of pharaonic power was extended to the honors due to

sacred animals, a custom completely absent in Greek religion but whose importance was quickly understood by the new Macedonian power: Alexander himself had sacrificed to the sacred Apis bull, and around 320 Ptolemy donated 50 talents of silver for its burial (Diodorus Siculus 1.84.7). The Ptolemaic kings were also crowned according to Egyptian custom: the first attested ceremony is that of Ptolemy V, but the practice may go back to Ptolemy II, if not Ptolemy I (Koenen 1977, pp. 56–63). In addition, an Egyptian ruler cult was instituted alongside the Greek pendant and celebrated within the Egyptian temples (Quaegebeur 1989; Pfeiffer 2008b; see Chapter 27). Some queens received their own cult as well, such as Arsinoe II and the young princess Berenice, a daughter of Ptolemy III who died at an early age. The cult of Arsinoe II in particular seems to have gained considerable popularity.

The Ptolemies, for their part, favored the Egyptian temples. Not only did they allow them a certain level of internal autonomy, but they also sustained them financially, either directly or indirectly. Several temples were thus restored, enlarged, or built during the Ptolemaic period (Arnold 1999), the most monumental example being the great Temple of Horus at Edfu, for which construction took place from the reign of the third to that of the twelfth Ptolemy (237–57 BC). Careers within the Ptolemaic army and administration were also opened up to the members of priestly families from the reign of Ptolemy I onward (Gorre 2009). In addition, to enable the kings to deal with the Egyptian temples as a whole, priestly synods were created, which assembled (in theory) all priests of all sanctuaries of Egypt (in practice, probably only the members of the high clergy were present). Decrees could be issued at these gatherings, normally written in three versions: Greek, Demotic, and Hieroglyphic. These documents present a recurring structure close to that of the Greek honorific decrees (Clarysse 1999): the priests praise the king for his benefactions toward the gods and the inhabitants of Egypt, before listing the new honors consequently awarded to them. The most famous is the decree issued in Memphis in 196 documenting the coronation of Ptolemy V, which is recorded on the Rosetta Stone, the founding text of Egyptology.

However, it is difficult to know to what extent the Ptolemaic kings chose to display the pharaonic aspect of their power. In their ordinances, they spoke as Greek kings, and it is as Greek kings that they figure on their coins, even if in both cases they addressed the entire population of the country. During their visits in the *chora* (Clarysse 2000), did they adopt a different stance according to the identity of their subjects? In Alexandria, Egyptian style sculptures of the Ptolemies as pharaohs have been found, but when these were first erected in the city – as well as their location – is still matter of debate (Stanwick 2002, pp. 19–20). Until proven otherwise, it is only with their Greek face that the kings appeared on the international scene.

3.3 The Golden Age (305/4–204 BC)

The history of the Ptolemies has long been determined by the judgment delivered by Polybius in a famous passage of his *Histories*. The Greek historian contrasts the efficient rule of the first three kings with that of Ptolemy IV (222/1–204 BC), a king who would have been “inattentive to business and difficult of approach, and treating with

entire negligence and indifference the agents charged with the conduct of affairs outside Egypt” (5.34.3–5.34.4). But this judgment cannot be accepted at face value (Erskine 2013), much less the idea – often extrapolated from the Polybian text by modern historians – of a continuing decline of the Ptolemaic state from Ptolemy IV’s reign (Fischer-Bovet 2015b). Nevertheless, it is certain that the third-century BC was a particularly flourishing period for the Ptolemies. The large urban developments in Alexandria show both the wealth of the kings and their capacity to mobilize a considerable workforce. This is reflected by the scale of the Hippodamian plan of the city, with two main streets each 30 m wide; the Heptastadion, a man-made causeway of 1250 m connecting the island of Pharos to the mainland; the artificial harbors, such as the Kibotos; and the lighthouse, an enormous tower more than 100 m high, which was intended both to guide ships and to manifest to all those who arrived in Egypt by sea (the majority of those coming into the country) the power of the dynasty that had built it. The royal palace, the Basileia, probably gave the same impression, all the more so since it housed Alexander’s tomb as well as the Mouseion and the Library, which were aimed at transforming Alexandria into the center of knowledge of the Hellenistic world (Chapter 32). It is also in Alexandria, the dynasty’s showcase, that the Ptolemaia – the most fabulous celebrations in honor of the royal family – were organized. Celebrated every four years, they were modeled after the Olympic Games, and all the delegates of the Greek states were invited to attend them. Some details are known about one of the first editions, thanks to the testimony of Kallixeinos of Rhodes, transmitted by Athenaeus (5.197–203) (Thompson 2000; Caneva 2016; see Box 3.1). The festival began with an extraordinary procession, the *pompe*, consisting in magnificent chariots carrying the images of the gods and kings, treasures, allegorical scenes, flocks of exotic animals, and finally a military parade. This was followed by sacrifices and athletic, equestrian, and musical competitions. The festivities ended with two banquets and the distribution of wine in the stadium.

The wealth that made all this possible came not only from Egypt itself, but also from the foreign possessions of the Ptolemies (Bagnall 1976). We saw how Ptolemy I gained control over Cyrenaica from the earliest days after taking control of Egypt. Following many vicissitudes, he finally conquered the south of Syria (Coele-Syria) in 301, and Cyprus around 294 BC. Some time later, he also took over the protectorate of the Cyclades islands. He established good relations with Rhodes and Athens, and incorporated Lycia, Pamphylia, and perhaps already Caria into his empire, so that the Eastern Mediterranean could be considered a “Ptolemaic sea” by the end of his reign. Ptolemy II (283/2–246) succeeded in countering the Seleucid ambitions regarding Coele-Syria during the first two Syrian Wars (274–271 and 260–253) and extended Ptolemaic influence into Ionia and Crete. He also maintained an active policy toward the cities of continental Greece and supported the Athenian-Spartan coalition against the Macedonian king Antigonos Gonatas during the Chremonidean War (268/7–262/1). Further to the south, he conquered Lower Nubia around 275. However, at about the same time, he lost the Cyrenaica: his half-brother Magas, who had been appointed governor by Ptolemy I, declared himself independent. Nevertheless, a reconciliation came at the end of the 250s, and the reunification took place some time later, symbolized by the union between the throne’s heir, Ptolemy III, and Magas’ daughter, Berenice. During Ptolemy III’s reign (246–222/1), the Ptolemaic protectorate over the Cyclades is no longer attested, but the king prevailed against the Seleucids

during the Third Syrian War (246–241), and even occupied Seleukeia in Pieria, Antiochus' harbor. In addition, new territories were gained in Asia Minor, the Dardanelles, and the south of Thracia. Ptolemy III continued to cultivate good relations with Rhodes and Athens, and formed close ties with the Achaean League. Even Ptolemy IV (222/1–204), whom Polybius judges so negatively, succeeded in countering Antiochus III during the Fourth Syrian War (219–217), and thus held control over the Ptolemaic foreign possessions (Huss 1976). However, the end of his reign coincides with a series of difficulties and inaugurates a period of both internal and external crises.

3.4 Crises and Reorganization (204–116 BC)

At his death in 204 BC, Ptolemy left his five-year-old heir in the hands of two powerful ministers, Sosibius and Agathocles, whose unpopularity among the Alexandrians turned to hatred after they plotted Queen Arsinoë III's murder. After the death of Sosibius, the inhabitants of the capital revolted against Agathocles and his supporters, who were ultimately lynched in the city stadium in 203 (Polybius 15.25.33). But the calm had barely been restored when the state was confronted with severe external threats. The new regents of Ptolemy V, Tlepolemus (until 201), and Aristomenes failed to stop Antiochus III during the Fifth Syrian War (c. 202–198): the defeat of Panion (in the Golan heights) caused the loss of Coele-Syria, and soon thereafter of the Ptolemaic possessions in Asia Minor; in the meantime, the Thracian territories were captured by Philip V of Macedonia.

Significantly weakened on the external front – even if diplomatic relations with the Seleucids were restored by the marriage of Ptolemy V and Cleopatra I – the Ptolemaic power also faced serious internal threats due to Egyptian uprisings (Veïsse 2004). At the end of Ptolemy IV's reign, a major revolt started in Upper Egypt, where a certain Haronnophris (“Horus-Onnophris”) proclaimed himself pharaoh in 205 BC. Six years later, he was succeeded by Chaonnophris (“May Onnophris Live”) – or perhaps he changed his name (Veïsse 2013). These two “programmatic” names referring to Onnophris/Osiris were aimed at presenting their bearers (or bearer) as kings restoring a rightful kingship over Egypt (Clarysse 1978), and at the same time challenged the link established by the Ptolemaic kings with the god Osiris (Coulon 2005, 2011).

The “Great Revolt” was certainly the result of a combination of factors. Some must have been general ones, since trouble broke out at the same time in the Delta, and even in the Fayum (Armoni 2013). Others seem to have been more specific to the Thebaid and can be connected with the firmer grip of the Ptolemies on the area by the end of the third century (Manning 2003b; Vandorpe 2000). In the Delta, in 197, the Ptolemaic army subjugated Lykopolis, a city that had previously been occupied by the rebels; their leaders were put to death during the king's coronation as pharaoh in Memphis on March 26, 196. In the Thebaid, Ptolemy V's authority was temporarily restored in 198, and then permanently from 190 onward, before Chaonnophris was defeated in 186. Operations still had to be conducted against rebel chiefs in the Western and Eastern Delta in 185/4 (Nespoulous-Phalippou 2015). During these events, the Egyptian clergy remained overwhelmingly loyal to the central power, as is shown by the priestly decrees issued during Ptolemy V's reign: the Decree of Memphis (196) glorifies the success of the Ptolemaic forces against

the “impious” rebels of Lykopolis, while the Second Decree of Philae (186) commends their victory over the “enemy of the gods,” Chaonnophris. Even in Thebes, the priests of Amon, whatever their relationship with Haronnophris–Chaonnophris, assumed a pragmatic attitude and restored their good relations with the Ptolemaic power once the revolt was ended. When Ptolemy V died prematurely in 180, he left to his wife Cleopatra I and to his three children a kingdom deprived of many of his previous foreign possessions but, at least, at peace.

From 180 to 177/6 BC, the queen Cleopatra I ruled in association with her son, Ptolemy VI (Figure 3.1). The regency then passed on to two members of the court after her death. In 170, when the king came of age, a joint rule of Ptolemy VI and his sister Cleopatra II (who had been married some time earlier) with their younger brother Ptolemy VIII (Figure 3.1) was instituted. This new form of throne association was soon challenged by the Sixth Syrian War (170–168). The invasion of Egypt by Antiochus IV caused severe discord between Ptolemy VI and Ptolemy VIII (or, rather, his supporters, given the young age of the king) in 169 – the first episode in a long series of dynastic struggles. However, the two kings reconciled and the Sixth Syrian War eventually ended thanks to the Roman ultimatum forcing Antiochus IV to retreat in the summer of 168. But the country was not yet at peace. Taking advantage of the recent events, a prominent member of the court, the Hellenized Egyptian Dionysios Petosarapis, attempted a coup d’état in Alexandria, and disorder spread to several parts of the *chora*. The situation stabilized by 164, but at the end of the same year a more severe clash arose again between Ptolemy VI and Ptolemy VIII. Ptolemy VI was forced to flee to Rome, then to Cyprus, before being called back by the Alexandrians in 163. In the end, an agreement was reached: the kingship of Ptolemy VI and Cleopatra II over Egypt was confirmed, while Ptolemy VIII was sent to reign over Cyrenaica. For the first time (the case of Magas of Cyrene being quite different), the rule over a foreign territory was used as compensation in the context of dynastic rivalry for power in Egypt (Vandorpe 2010, p. 170); this was to happen again at the end of the second century.

The rest of Ptolemy VI’s reign, from 163 until 145 BC, seems to have been relatively peaceful. At his death in 145, Ptolemy VIII came back from Cyrene, was recognized as the new king, and married his sister Cleopatra II. Around 141, he concluded a second marriage with his niece Cleopatra III, the daughter of Ptolemy VI and Cleopatra II. Soon, however, discord arose among this shaky royal trio. The rupture took place by the end of 132, and in September 131 Ptolemy VIII and Cleopatra III were forced to leave Alexandria for Cyprus. In Egypt, Cleopatra II inaugurated a new regnal area, the first year of which corresponded to the 39th year of Ptolemy VIII. She also abandoned the epithet *Evergetes*, which she had shared with her husband and her daughter, and adopted that of *Philometor Soteira*, “Who loves her mother, Savior,” making reference both to her deceased husband and to the founder of the dynasty.

By spring 130 at the latest, Ptolemy VIII was back in Egypt. Nevertheless, Cleopatra II held Alexandria until 129/8, and documents remained dated according to her regnal years in some parts of Middle and Upper Egypt in 131 and 130 (Bielman Sánchez and Lonzo 2015, pp. 321–339). It has been said that in the meantime, a new rebel seized the crown in Thebes, like Haronnophris–Chaonnophris before him, but this “Pharaoh Harsiesis” is likely another historiographical myth (Véisse 2011). After several confusing



Figure 3.1 Portraits of dignitaries on clay seal impressions, identified as Ptolemy VI and VIII (top-left and top-right), Cleopatra VII (bottom-left), and Caesar (bottom-right). The seal impressions are part of a hoard of about 800 sealings said to be discovered in a jar in a repository of the Edfu temple. They may have been originally attached to late Ptolemaic correspondence with e.g. the administration in Alexandria. Source: APM 8177-071; 8177-278; 8177-056; 8177-134; cf. Plantzos 1997; Lorber and van Oppen de Ruiter 2017; © Allard Pierson Museum.

years of civil war, the joint rule was re-established in 124, and in 118 a general amnesty was promulgated by the three kings in order to address the many issues caused or exacerbated by the fighting. Part of the reconciliation involved the deification of Ptolemy the “New Philopator” (*Neos Philopator*), namely Ptolemy “Memphite,” the son of Cleopatra II and Ptolemy VIII, who had been killed by his father during the conflict (Chauveau 2000a). Ptolemy VIII died two years later, in 116, followed soon afterward by Cleopatra II.

Despite these dynastic conflicts, the second century cannot be considered a period of mere decline for the Ptolemies (Vandorpe 2010; Jördens and Quack 2011). In fact, the kings eventually succeeded in surmounting the disasters brought about by the Fifth and Sixth Syrian Wars, and put an end to the inner revolts. Many long-term reforms were also introduced during this century: new garrisons were installed, and the recruitment of Egyptian soldiers was further developed (Redon 2014; Vandorpe 2014a; Fischer-Bovet 2014); the office of *epistrategos* was created; in Upper Egypt, the network of governmental institutions (e.g. granaries, banks, notarial offices) was considerably expanded (Vandorpe 2011). In addition, more Egyptian temples were built and decorated under the reigns of Ptolemy VI and VIII than during any other reign (Hölbl 2001, pp. 257–271), which points to a certain degree of prosperity in the country. Even the so-called “persecution” of scholars by Ptolemy VIII can be challenged (Horster 2011). On the international scene, despite the permanent loss of a great part of the empire and the secession of Cyrenaica between 163 and 145, the Ptolemies were still able to advance an active foreign policy during this century: they held political and cultural influence in the Aegean until the mid-second century (Buraselis 2011), and Lower Nubia, lost at the turn of the third and second centuries, was re-occupied (Török 2009, pp. 393–411). In 145, King Ptolemy VI even led a victorious campaign in Syria, although this was dramatically ended by his death following a fall from his horse. Finally, despite the important role played by the Romans in 168, and perhaps also in 163, one cannot speak of a “Roman protectorate” over Egypt during the second century (Lampela 1998).

3.5 116–80 BC: A Transitional Period

From 116 to 107, Ptolemy IX, the eldest son of Ptolemy VIII and Cleopatra III, reigned together with his mother, while Ptolemy X was made “king of Cyprus” in 114/3. This association between mother and son is striking insofar as Ptolemy IX was a married adult at the time, which makes the situation very different from the throne association between Cleopatra I and Ptolemy VI from 180 to 177/6. In the year 107, Cleopatra III succeeded in rousing the Alexandrians against the king, who was compelled to flee (Pausanias 1.9.1–2; Porphyry, *FGH*. II 260 F2 8). The two brothers then exchanged positions: Ptolemy X departed from Cyprus to Egypt, while Ptolemy IX succeeded in taking hold of the island around 105. The change of king in Egypt enhanced the dominant position of Cleopatra III: not only did she continue to be named first in the official protocols, but an unprecedented parallel dating system was adopted, in which the beginning of the queen’s rule was given as 116 and that of Ptolemy X only as 114/3. Ptolemy X became sole king after the death (rather than assassination: Van’t Dack et al. 1989, p. 140) of his mother in 101. Around the same time, Ptolemy VIII’s illegitimate son Ptolemy Apion, to whom his father had bequeathed the Cyrenaica, succeeded in taking effective control of the region. When, at his death in 96, he left his kingdom to the Romans, the oldest foreign territory of the Ptolemies was permanently lost. Since Lower Nubia was also forfeited by the end of the second century BC, the foreign Ptolemaic possessions were now limited to Cyprus; but this island was held by Ptolemy IX, and was therefore independent from Egypt.

At the beginning of 88, Ptolemy X himself had to leave Alexandria due to strife with his troops (Porphyrus, *FGH* II 260 F 9); his purpose was to recruit mercenaries abroad (Van't Dack et al. 1989, p. 141). Ptolemy IX seized the opportunity to come back, in agreement with the Alexandrians. The first task of the king was to replace Ptolemy X's authority in the *chora*, and the new revolt that broke out in the Thebaid can probably be connected with the dynastic struggle (Agut and Moreno García 2016, p. 725). The last years of Ptolemy IX were more stable, and he was the last Ptolemy to act independently from Rome. During his second reign (88–81/0), Cyprus and Egypt were rejoined once again.

3.6 The Ptolemies and Rome (80–30 BC)

Again, severe difficulties arose at the death of the reigning king during the winter of 81/0 BC. Thanks to his connections with Sulla, the strong man of Rome at the time, a son of Ptolemy X made his way to the throne (Appian, *Bella Civilia* 1.102) and married Queen Cleopatra-Berenice III (daughter of Ptolemy IX). This Ptolemy XI's reign was, however, the shortest of all the kings of the dynasty: after less than three weeks, he was killed by the Alexandrians for having murdered his new wife. The Alexandrians then recalled the two sons of Ptolemy IX, who resided at the court of Mithridates of Pontus: one of them, Ptolemy XII, was proclaimed king of Egypt, the other, king of Cyprus. Ptolemy XII adopted the glorious epithet “God New Dionysus,” but he is better known as “Flute-player” (*Auletes*), as the Alexandrians called him. His main concern was to ensure a good relationship with the Roman Senate, in order to entrench his own power and to maintain Egypt's independence at a time when the whole Eastern Mediterranean was subjected by Rome. After years of toil, he obtained the coveted title of “Friend and Ally of the Roman People” in 59, but in exchange he was forced to accept the Roman annexation of Cyprus and the dispossession of his brother. This was the cause of a new Alexandrian revolt, which forced him to flee. In his place, the Alexandrians recognized his daughter Berenice IV as ruler. It is only thanks to an armed intervention by the governor of Syria, Aulus Gabinius, acting with the unofficial consent of Pompey, that he could recuperate his throne in 55, putting his daughter to death. When he died in 51, he left behind four other children. The eldest, Cleopatra VII (Figure 3.1), was proclaimed sovereign, but shortly afterward had to accept as co-ruler her brother Ptolemy XIII, accordingly to Ptolemy XII's will.

This last queen of Egypt is a rather enigmatic historic figure, because of the scarcity of direct evidence and the influence of Octavian propaganda in the literary sources. Even her genealogy is obscure: was her mother Queen Cleopatra VI or another woman of the court? Whatever the case may be, it is unlikely that she was Egyptian, because the supporters of Octavian would surely have exploited this fact (Bingen 2007a, p. 53, 66). Similarly, even if, according to Plutarch, Cleopatra VII was the first of her lineage to speak Egyptian, we must not rely too much on this assertion, given the fact that the author also attributes to the queen the knowledge of the languages of the Medes, the Syrians, the Parthians, the Ethiopians, the Hebrews, the Arabians, and even the Troglodytes (*Antonius* 27.3–4). Like the other Ptolemies, the daughter of Ptolemy XII was above all a princess of Macedonian

origin and Greek culture, as expressed in her monetary iconography. This did not prevent her from maintaining – like her predecessors, and for the same reasons – pharaonic traditions, but it must also be noted that according to these traditions she was depicted as queen and not as pharaoh on the walls of Egyptian temples. It is not the right place here to recount the details of Cleopatra's reign, or the diverse issues related to her domestic and foreign policy (see Chapter 22; Chauveau 2002; Bingen 2007a; Ashton 2008; Heinen 2009). What can be underlined is her original political itinerary, which saw her rise from the rank of protégée of Rome (at Caesar's time) to that of ally (with Marc Antony) and then of enemy (against Octavian). The support of Caesar from 48 to 44 enabled Cleopatra, first, to prevail over Ptolemy XIII, and then to establish a strong personal power in Egypt despite her official crown-association with her second brother Ptolemy XIV (47–44). Then, from 37/6 onward, the partnership with Antony allowed a rebirth of the Ptolemaic empire in a new “Romano-Hellenistic” perspective (Will 1982, 2, p. 545). Additionally, Cleopatra's reign was a time of innovation in the field of royal ideology, as shown by the adoption of new epithets (Bingen 2007a, pp. 44–79). However, the balance of power between Antony and Octavian ultimately put an end to this original but ephemeral experience: after the defeat of Actium, the suicide of Antony and Cleopatra in August of 30, followed by the murder of Ptolemy XV, ends the story of the Ptolemaic dynasty.

3.7 Conclusion

For almost three centuries, the Ptolemies ruled as double-faced kings, both *basileis* and pharaohs – the last pharaohs to live in Egypt. Despite internal discord in the second century, the house of Ptolemy revealed itself as the longest-lasting of all the Hellenistic dynasties – of all Egyptian dynasties, even (Manning 2010; Vandorpe 2011, p. 160). And even if the Ptolemies were ultimately unable to compete with Rome, it is paradoxically through Rome that their power was revived one final time under Cleopatra VII.

FURTHER READING

A clear and comprehensive synthesis of the history of Ptolemaic Egypt is provided by Vandorpe (2010). For an extensive overview, see Hölbl (2000) and Huss (2001), and for chronological issues, Bennett (2001–2013). Ashton (2001) and Stanwick (2002), both devoted to royal sculpture, highlight the “two faces” of the Ptolemaic kings. For the ruler cult, see Pfeiffer (2008b) and Chapter 27 in the present volume, while for the significant role of the Ptolemaic queens, see Chapters 22 and 34. Manning (2010) sheds light on the Ptolemaic state conceived as a premodern and hybrid state. Jördens and Quack (2011) provide a new approach to the second century, while Buraselis et al. (2013) and Caneva (2016) present many aspects of the foreign and domestic policy of the Ptolemies. For Cleopatra VII in particular, see Heinen (2009), Bingen (2007a), and Chauveau (2002).

CHAPTER FOUR

A Roman Province in the Eastern Mediterranean

Tomasz Derda

In the first days of August of 30 BC, Octavian entered Alexandria. The last episode in the history of the Ptolemaic monarchy was about to end. Octavian came to Egypt having in mind a clearly delineated plan of incorporating the country into the Roman Empire. The ephemeral state of Marc Antony and Cleopatra ceased immediately after Actium, and the queen's attempts to save the monarchy by approaching the conqueror and yielding power to the 15-year-old Ptolemy XV Caesarion (who, since 37 BC, had ruled jointly with his mother) were a priori doomed to failure. The queen, having understood the finality of the defeat, chose death by her own hand. Octavian did not happen to be a vengeful victor, as he was to prove in the future by taking care of Cleopatra and Antony's children. Caesarion, however, could not be allowed to assume power in Egypt; as the natural son of Caesar, he would have posed an obvious threat to the son by mere adoption. The Alexandrian philosopher Areios, when asked by Octavian how to deal with him, supposedly answered paraphrasing the *Iliad* (2.204): *Polykaisarie* – “too many Caesars” (Plutarch, *Antonius* 81.1). Caesarion's assassination was a part of Roman reason of state. The boy tried to flee from the grasp of the master of the world through the Red Sea to India, but his assassins reportedly hunted him down in Koptos when his tutor, out of a desire to gain the victor's gratitude, persuaded him to return.

4.1 Strengths and Lacunas of the Source Material

Our knowledge of Roman Egypt is based on extraordinarily rich source material, incomparable with that from any other region of the ancient world. Documents written on papyrus – produced by the administration of the whole Roman state – are only

exceptionally preserved outside Egypt in the Judean Desert, the modern-day Jordan, and areas by the Euphrates River; documents inscribed on ostraca have a slightly better chance of preservation. The surviving documents come mostly from Middle Egypt, from the Fayum to Hermopolis Magna (the Heptanomia in the language of the Roman administration), the Eastern Desert (mainly ostraca), and the Thebaid. On the other hand, we have no documents from the Delta (except for Tanis, Thmouis, and Boubastis, where carbonized papyri were discovered; in this state, they are much less vulnerable to humidity). Only a few documents are of Alexandrian provenance: letters sent far into Egypt, which often had official character and were written in the prefect's chancellery.

The documents preserved in mummy cartonnages are of exceptional value for the study of Egypt's history in the Ptolemaic Period and the first 100 years of Roman domination. The cartonnages were made of papyrus wastepaper: the sheets were properly arranged and cut in the shape of a mummified corpse (human or animal), then covered with a layer of plaster, on which a depiction of the deceased was painted. Although we have no direct testimonies concerning the manner in which the wastepaper was acquired by the cartonnage makers, we may suppose that old and useless papyri were bought not one by one, but in bulk. The state administration must have been the most important source of wastepaper. Among the cartonnage papyri, there are groups of Alexandrian documents; some of them had come straight from the palace chancellery. Let us mention the extraordinary discovery in 2000 of a document initialed personally by the ruler, probably Cleopatra VII. The text exempts the Roman Q. Cascellius of export and import duties up to about 300 tons of wheat. At the bottom of the sheet, the queen added *ginesthoi* – “make it happen” (van Minnen 2000b; Zimmerman 2002; see Figure 4.1).

The chronological distribution of the preserved documents is also uneven. The majority of documentary texts date to the second century AD, a slightly lesser number to the third. The first period of Roman rule is the worst represented (Habermann 1998).

The most important documents for a researcher of Roman Egypt (which also happen to be the most numerous) are those written in Greek – the language used by the administration, from the highest level, namely the prefect's chancellery, down to the local offices of village scribes. Egyptian, in its Demotic version, remained the second language. The Demotic papyri become noticeably fewer than in the Ptolemaic Period (Chapter 12), yet extensive publications from the last several years (e.g. of documents from Soknopaiou Nesos or Tebtynis) call for a revision of the opinion on the marginal place of Demotic in this era. Latin was used only in certain strictly defined spheres of activity, such as the army; veterans also used it now and then (e.g. in their private correspondence). The inhabitants of Egypt, who enjoyed Roman citizenship, but did not necessarily know the language of the Romans, were in theory supposed to draw certain documents (e.g. wills) in Latin. However, the number of Greek “copies” (i.e. translations) of these documents is suspiciously great, which raises the question whether these “copies” had any Latin prototypes whatsoever, or were so styled only for the sake of formality.

It is obvious that these particular characteristics of the papyrological documentation greatly influence our knowledge. Thanks to the Alexandrian documents preserved in mummy cases, we know the upper levels of the Ptolemaic administration no worse than the activities of the prefect of Roman Egypt. Moreover, our knowledge of the municipal centers is much less fragmentary for the Roman Period. Similarly, the crucial (and not only



Figure 4.1 Signature of Cleopatra? The agreement attributing privileges to Q. Cascellius has been signed by the ruler, probably Cleopatra VII, who added *ginesthoi*, “make it happen,” at the bottom of the sheet (Alexandria?, 33 BC). Source: courtesy Berlin, Staatliche Museen – Ägyptisches Museum und Papyrussammlung P. 25239. © Staatliche Museen zu Berlin.

for Egypt) issues of landownership, the functioning of the fiscal system, and the lowest, local levels of administration are better known for the Roman Period.

In conclusion, let us mention another, often neglected characteristic of the papyrological documentation available to historians of Roman Egypt. Initially, papyrologists could literally pick and choose from among unpublished papyri. They selected particularly interesting and well-preserved documents (“very important text, easy to read,” as this papyrologist’s dream was defined half a century ago by Turner in a lecture in Warsaw). The best example of this practice for Roman Egypt, albeit an extreme one, is the case of the so-called *libelli*, or certificates of offering a sacrifice to pagan gods under Decius’ reign,

which the Christians – not without reason – perceived as a form of persecution aimed against them. Today, 46 such documents are known (the last one, published in 2002, is P. Lips. II 152), while 41 were known in 1923 (Knipfing 1923). This means that only five documents have been added over the last 90 years. Other types of documents (e.g. private letters) drew far less scholarly attention in the first decades of papyrology; as a matter of fact, it is only in the past 20 years that we have seen an exhaustive exploration of these sources, which, first and foremost, convey information concerning social history.

4.2 Emperors in Egypt

During his stay in Alexandria, Octavian visited the tomb of Alexander; however, he refused to see the sepulchers of the Ptolemies, insisting that his wish was to see a king, not corpses (Suetonius, *Divus Augustus* 18). We also know that he visited Memphis, for there he spurned the proposition to see the holy bull Apis, this time saying that his custom was to worship gods, not cattle (Cassius Dio 51.16.5). We have no information that Octavian traveled any further in Egypt, whose conquest filled him with such pride: *Aegyptum imperio populi romani adieci* (“I added Egypt to the empire of the Roman people”), as he stated in his political autobiography, in which he recapitulated his rule (the *Res gestae Divi Augusti* preserved in a large inscription in the temple of Roma and Augustus in Ancyra, modern Ankara).

The first emperor was no admirer of the Ptolemaic dynasty, nor of pharaonic traditions. He did, however, take trophies home, foremost Psammetichus II’s obelisk, now present in Piazza di Montecitorio in Rome; some Roman and Byzantine emperors followed his example (among them Theodosius I, who had Thutmose III’s needle put up on the *spina* of Constantinople’s hippodrome). Augustus had Psammetichus II’s obelisk transported to the Campus Martius two decades after his victory over Cleopatra and Antony. There, it was erected as the gnomon of a giant sundial (*horologium*) (Buchner 1982), or as a solar meridian (Heslin 2007). It was a huge task to transport such a heavy monolith without damaging it. Special cargo ships were built, and canals had to be dug to move it to its final destination, where it became an icon of imperial power.

Only a few Roman rulers visited Egypt during the next three centuries (Halfmann 1985; Capponi 2010a). Under Tiberius’ reign, it was his adopted son Germanicus who traveled to Alexandria, although without the emperor’s approval. There, he was enthusiastically welcomed, and had to refuse divine honors presented to him. Nero intended to visit Egypt, and had baths built in Alexandria, but the journey was canceled. In AD 69, Vespasian was proclaimed emperor by the legions in Alexandria; he spent several months in Egypt before returning to Rome. His son and general, Titus, passed by Egypt after the siege of Jerusalem in 70 and visited the Apis bull. In 130–131, more than a decade after he had crushed the Jewish revolt (115–117; see Chapter 20), Hadrian traveled around the country for almost eight months. In the course of this journey, his favorite, Antinoos, met his tragic end in the waters of the Nile, and was honored with the foundation of a new city, Antinoopolis. Hadrian nevertheless continued his Nile cruise, and visited the Memnon colossus in Thebes with his wife Sabina (Chapter 6). During Marcus Aurelius’ reign, Avidius Cassius, son of the prefect of Egypt, managed to defeat

the *Boukoloi* (“cattlemen”) rebels, who had almost conquered Alexandria (Alston 1999); in 175, he was proclaimed emperor by his troops, but he was killed three months later. Marcus Aurelius voyaged to Alexandria to suppress the sedition. The visit of Septimius Severus and his family in 199/200 held paramount importance for the country: the emperor raised the nome capitals to the rank of *poleis* by establishing city councils (*boulai*) therein. In December 215, Caracalla arrived at Alexandria with the intention to travel around Egypt in the footsteps of Hadrian (papyri from the countryside record preparations for the emperor’s visit). However, he gave up on his plans after riotous events took place in Alexandria; he had Egyptian natives expelled from the city and caused a bloodbath among the elite (Rodriguez 2012). Alexander Severus planned a visit with his mother Julia Mamaea c. 233 (van Minnen and Sosin 1996). In the chaotic period of the soldier emperors (235–284), no peaceful or even military imperial visits are attested. During the short Palmyrene occupation of Egypt (270–272), the “warrior queen” Zenobia (Zahran 2003), well educated and reportedly more beautiful than Cleopatra, may have been responsible for the restoration of the singing Memnon colossus in Thebes (Bowersock 1984). She and her son Vaballathus were defeated in battle by Aurelian, who thus recaptured Egypt. In his first war as emperor-tetrarch (c. 293/4), Galerius crushed a local Thebaid rebellion, after which he may have accepted the victory title *Thebaicus Maximus* (Leadbetter 2009). This rebellion was probably the reason why the Thebaid was reorganized as a separate province. A few years later, in 298, Galerius’ colleague-emperor Diocletian traveled through Egypt having quelled the rebellion of L. Domitius Domitianus and the latter’s deputy Achilleus, thus regaining control of the country. He negotiated a treaty with the Blemmyes and the Nobatae tribes in Nubia. Diocletian’s reign fundamentally changed the organization of the country and became a symbolic caesura between Roman and Late Antique Egypt (Chapter 8).

4.3 The Country and Its People

Egypt was a large and exceptional province of the Roman Empire. Its longitudinal extent from the Mediterranean coast to Aswan (Syene) equals almost 1000 km. The Roman Period was a time of prosperity for the Nile country, as well as for the oases in the Western Desert: the Great Oasis – nowadays comprising two oases distinguished as separate units, namely Kharga and Dakhla – and the Small Oasis, modern-day Bahriya. The Eastern Desert was also an area of exploitation and management for the Romans: trade routes, strictly controlled and carefully guarded by the army, ran through it to the harbors on the Red Sea coast: Myos Hormos and Berenike, located far in the south. Here too were the quarries of porphyry (Mons Porphyrites) and granodiorite (Mons Claudianus), put under military supervision (Chapters 15 and 17). The zone of the Mediterranean coast west of Alexandria – a region with thriving agricultural and industrial activity – is also included in Egypt’s territory.

A country with such great longitudinal extent could not have functioned in Antiquity as a political unity without convenient communication (Chapter 15). This was provided by the River Nile, together with Bahr Yusuf and the parallel channels. One could sail northward with the river’s current, or southward with the aid of the prevailing north winds. A simple

sail was sufficient to allow the wind power to push ships laden with people and goods slowly but steadily toward their destination. The journey from Alexandria (or, actually, its land harbor, Schedia) to Oxyrhynchos took at least 10 days (P.Oxy. XLII 3052).

The very same north winds, so favorable for transport on the Nile, hindered considerably the navigation of the Red Sea. Ships from India, full of cargo, were unloaded in Berenike, while smaller vessels, which were easier to maneuver, sailed farther north, to Myos Hormos, whence their goods were transported by caravan to the Nile Valley. The ships burdened with freight from India could not reach the Gulf of Suez, never mind the canal of the Wadi Tumilat connecting the gulf and the Nile; this was used in Antiquity until the Arab Period, but only as a communication artery for the Near East.

Egypt has always been the most populated country in the region (one district of modern-day Cairo, Shubra, is inhabited by more people than the whole of Libya). While few data are available for the Ptolemaic Period (numbers from third-century BC tax lists from the Fayum may be extrapolated to give a total population of about one and a half million at that time; see Clarysse and Thompson 2006, 2, p. 92–201), for the Roman Period two ancient authors comment on the overall population. The account of Diodorus (1.31.6–9), writing at the end of the first century BC, is unclear, but according to the most probable interpretation it speaks of seven million inhabitants (Lewis 1983, pp. 158–159; van Minnen 1997), as opposed to three million (Bagnall and Frier 2006, p. 52): “in the old days the population of Egypt was seven million and today it is not less” (not “today it is not less than three million”). According to Josephus (*Bellum Judaicum* 2.385), Egypt was inhabited by eight million people (seven and a half in the *chora*, half a million in Alexandria). He refers here to tax registers, to which he could have had access. Seven or eight million inhabitants is a large number that tends to unsettle scholars, who have in mind the censuses of the nineteenth century: the country was inhabited by two and a half million people at the time of Napoleon, and almost seven million in 1882. However, it is not inconceivable, as indicated by our estimations of the populations of the biggest towns in Egypt, as well as its villages (Lo Cascio 1999 also accepts Josephus’ information, while acknowledging Diodorus’ by suggesting that his three million refers to *andres*, “men,” or the masculine population – namely those who in the Roman Period were liable to the poll tax or *laographia*). The total population of Egypt in the Roman Period constituted about 10% of that of the whole empire (the population of which during the reign of Trajan is estimated at 50–100 million).

The high urbanization rate was an essential characteristic of Egypt. Beyond doubt, Alexandria, which in the Roman Period could boast a population of c. 500 000–600 000 inhabitants, was a world apart (Delia 1989). Hermopolis Magna, the only city of the Egyptian *chora* about whose size we can say anything specific, had 4200 houses (*oikiai*) in two of its four districts in the third century AD (SPP V 101). Bagnall and Frier (2006) carefully propose that the two remaining districts could have been smaller, and assume that the whole city counted 7000 *oikiai*; this number multiplied by 5.3 (the average number of people per house in census returns) gives 37 000 inhabitants on c. 120 ha, which results in an average population density of 300 people per hectare. Hermopolis Magna was a big city – bigger than many other nome capitals – but not an exceptional one. Ptolemais Euergetis (or Arsinoe, the capital of the Arsinoite nome), Athribis (in the Delta), Herakleopolis Magna and Tanis, and probably also still Memphis, could all have been more populous. Other *metropoleis* were not much smaller, and could have counted on average c. 25 000 inhabitants. Bagnall and Frier reckon the total population of the nome

capitals at 1.25 million at minimum; this, together with the lower population estimates for the whole of Egypt (4.75 million, instead of the eight million suggested by Josephus), gives an urbanization rate of 37%.

Some of the villages in the Egyptian *chora* were also very populous. Karanis had c. 4000 inhabitants in the second century AD (Geremek 1969). At the same time, an official update of the register of men in Narmouthis liable to poll tax (BGU XX 2862) records 2099 *andres* (“men” aged between 14 and 62 years), giving a total of c. 6500 inhabitants. Both examples come from large villages in the Fayum that show a considerable number of urban features (see later).

According to one of the models (van Minnen 1997), the area of arable land in Upper Egypt amounted to c. three million *arouras*, and that in the Delta to c. four and a half million, giving a total of seven and a half million *arouras*, or 20625 km². These figures essentially correspond to the acreage of arable land in Upper Egypt at the beginning of the twentieth century, but show that in the Delta the acreage has grown considerably: from c. 12000 km² in Antiquity to 15000 km² 100 years ago. The population density – on the assumption that the country was inhabited by eight million people – equals as many as 340 people per square kilometer. The biggest nomes, the Hermopolite, Oxyrhynchite, and Herakleopolite, had c. 300 000–400 000 *arouras*; the largest one, the Arsinoite, in the period of the maximum reach of cultivation, considerably exceeded 400 000 *arouras*, or 110 000 ha.

The social structure of Roman Egypt comprised various levels of distinctive status (Chapter 18). The topmost level was occupied by a small group of Roman citizens who enjoyed various privileges, including those of a fiscal nature (they were exempt from the poll tax). Below, there was a group of urban Greeks (*metropolitai*) – the inhabitants of the nome capitals, who paid the poll tax at a reduced rate (see later) – and the Jews, who benefited from a privileged status until the calamitous uprising in AD 115–117 (Chapter 20). The remainder of the country’s population occupied the lowest ranks of the hierarchy. The way to the topmost echelons reserved for Roman citizens was through either military service or Alexandrian citizenship: only an Alexandrian citizen could obtain Roman citizenship from the *princeps*.

A fundamental structural change was introduced by Caracalla, who in 212 bestowed Roman citizenship upon all free inhabitants of the empire through the *Constitutio Antoniniana* (Caracalla’s official name was M. Aurelius Severus Antoninus Pius); among the new citizens were of course millions of inhabitants of Egypt.

A feature that distinguished Egypt from other Roman provinces was the relatively small number of slaves, estimated at c. 10 (Biežuńska-Małowist 1977) to 13% (Bagnall and Frier 2006, p. 70) of the total population. Their economical significance was less than in Italy (for example), due to social and landowning structures inherited from previous periods. The great estates did not employ many slaves; the landowners’ income derived rather from the rents paid by the large number of farmers who took small plots of land on lease. Moreover, the low number of slaves meant a low number of freedmen.

4.4 Guarding the New Province and Its Trade Routes

Roman rule in Egypt relied on the strength of the army (Alston 1995; see also Chapter 11). Octavian left three of his 18 legions by the Nile: III *Cyrenaica*, XXII *Deiotariana*, and a third whose name is not mentioned in the sources. Additional infantry and cavalry units

were stationed in the countryside (12, according to Strabo). The first legion was installed in Nikopolis, a military camp established 2.5 miles east of Alexandria, so named to honor Octavian's victory at Actium. The second was garrisoned in Babylon, a strategic point in Middle Egypt (within the confines of modern-day Cairo, where in the following centuries an urban center called Old Cairo was developed). The third legion was stationed in Upper Egypt; it has been suggested that it was based in Thebes, but a location in Koptos seems more probable (P.Qasr Ibrim). One cannot but see a strategic purpose in such a deployment of troops: the legion in Nikopolis checked the turbulent Alexandria, protecting the prefect and the crucial institutions of the country; the soldiers in Babylon controlled Middle Egypt and the waterway connecting the Nile with the Red Sea (Sheehan 2010); and the unit in Koptos safeguarded not only the Roman interests in the Thebaid, but also the place where the Nile Valley comes closest to the Red Sea. From here, the Eastern Desert was controlled, as were the desert routes that led to the harbors on the Red Sea coast and to the quarries of Mons Claudianus and Mons Porphyrites. Under Tiberius' reign, one legion was withdrawn, and the two remaining were installed in the Nikopolis camp. Perhaps during Trajan's lifetime (in connection with the suppression of the Jewish uprising that erupted in Cyrenaica and spread over a considerable part of Lower and Middle Egypt in AD 115), and certainly no later than AD 127, *legio II Traiana fortis* arrived. For a long time, this remained the main Roman armed force in Egypt, for in the first years of Hadrian's reign, *legio III Cyrenaica* left the country (shortly after August 119) and *legio XXII Deiotariana* disappears from the documentary record. All in all, only a few revolts took place under Roman rule, usually on a minor scale. The protection of the long-distance trade routes became one of the most important missions of the Roman army (see Chapter 37).

4.5 A Prefect in Charge of the “Province of Alexandria and Egypt” and the Provincial “Government”

After the capture of Alexandria, Octavian stayed in Egypt for several months. During this time, he laid the foundations of the new system by reshaping the central administration and settling the military organization of the new province. For the Egyptians – notwithstanding Octavian's visible efforts aimed at limiting the role of the temples in the life of the country – the new ruler was bound to remain the successor of the kings, a pharaoh, who after the fashion of his predecessors would take care of the religion by building new temples and embellishing the old ones.

Egypt was granted an extraordinary status within the empire. According to the prevalent opinion, Octavian felt disquiet about the loyalty of the people who were supposed to control Egypt. Egyptian grain streamed in abundance to Italy to feed the Roman plebs and assure the *princeps* a stable rule. This rich country had natural defenses, since access was possible only by the coastal route running along the Mediterranean from Syro-Palestine or Cyrenaica. All these circumstances resulted in the prohibition of entry into Egypt by any person of senatorial rank without the personal permission of the *princeps*, issued straight after the conquest (Cassius Dio 51.17.1; Tacitus 2.59.3; Jördens 2009).

Under Octavian, who counted his rule in Egypt from Thoth 1, 30/29 BC (before the title of Augustus was bestowed upon him by the Senate), the foundations of the central administration were laid (Geraci 1983; Capponi 2005; see Chapter 8). He handed over the power in the country not to a governor of senatorial rank, but to a prefect – a governor with an exceptional range of authority, a real “viceroy” (the designation, however anachronistic, describes well the nature of the office). The first prefect was C. Cornelius Gallus, a friend of Octavian, who subdued a rebellion in Thebes, but after he fell into disgrace with the *princeps*, he committed suicide (see Chapters 9 and 34).

The prefect was an *eques*, and the post constituted a crowning achievement in his equestrian *cursus honorum*. He had no superior except for the *princeps* in Rome – a fact that secured his exceptional position both in Egypt and in the whole empire (Jördens 2009). The prefect and the *praefectus praetorio* were among the best-paid magistrates of the state, called *ducenarii*, whose salary was equal to 200 000 sesterces per year. Standing at the head of the three (later two) legions that constituted the garrison of Egypt, the prefect was the commander-in-chief of the provincial army. He ruled the country by means of edicts (*ius edicendi*) and possessed *ius gladii* (“the right of the sword,” i.e. the right to pronounce death sentence). He decided on the assessment of taxes and the procedure of their collection; his special concern was the punctuality of grain shipment to Alexandrian Neapolis (a part of the city adjoining the great harbor), where every year the great fleet was formed that provided Rome with grain.

The prefect represented the *princeps* before the people of Egypt (Jördens 2009). He resided in Alexandria, whence every two years he set out on a circuit of the whole province (*conventus*), which lasted several months (Foti Talamanca 1974). He arranged the matters of the eastern Delta in Pelusium, of Middle Egypt in Memphis, and of Upper Egypt probably in Ptolemais Hermiou, and from c. AD 130 onward in Antinoopolis. The *conventus* sessions are also attested in the capital of the Arsinoite nome (Fayum), Ptolemais Euergetis, and Koptos. They had primarily a judicial character and took place in the presence of local magistrates (*strategoï* and royal scribes). The prefect often combined his journey with sightseeing, as attested by the inscriptions left on the singing Memnon colossus at Thebes. When he could not settle a matter personally, or simply did not recognize the need, he entrusted an official of lower rank with the task (often an *epistrategos* or *strategos* of a nome), or even an officer (usually a centurion) of a military detachment stationed on the spot.

The high-ranking officials of the province answerable directly to the prefect formed a kind of provincial “government.” All of them were Roman *equites* of procuratorial rank. The judicial administration was overseen by a *iuridicus* (in Greek, *dikaiodotes*) (Kupiszewski 1953–1954), while the financial affairs of the *princeps’* *patrimonium* were managed by the head of the *idios logos*, literally the “private account” (Swarney 1970). The finances of the province fell within the competence of the *dioiketes*, whose title was a continuation of the highest office of the Ptolemaic monarchy (see Chapter 7). The administration of cults, with particular emphasis on the supervision of temples, belonged to the *archiereus* (“chief priest”). The *procurator usiacus*, whose title refers to the estates owned by the *princeps’* family and the most illustrious Romans, controlled the manner of exploitation of state-owned land. The *procurator Neas Poleos* (named after the aforementioned Alexandrian district of Neapolis, near the great harbor) was responsible for gathering grain shipped to the

capital as rent for the lease of the state-owned land, and as taxes in kind; this magistrate was personally answerable to the prefect for the punctual dispatch of the grain fleet to Rome. The *procurator Phari* (called after the island with the famous lighthouse) supervised the import and export of all goods subjected to special regulations.

4.6 Governing the Countryside

Probably since the very first years of Roman rule, the country was administratively divided into four *epistrategiai*. The details of the provincial organization were not particularly interesting for the Roman authors; even our best informer, Strabo, who visited Egypt in 25 BC (or one year earlier), only vaguely reported on this subject (17.1.13): “But the Romans have, to the best of their ability, I might say, set most things right, ... having appointed throughout the country officials called epistrategi and nomarchs and ethnarchs, who were thought worthy to superintend affairs of no great importance” (translation Jones, Loeb Classical Library).

Strabo’s record does not withstand the confrontation with papyrological sources, since the latter are silent about nomarchs and ethnarchs in the capacities ascribed to them by the geographer. On the other hand, the key figures of the Roman administration, namely the *strategoi* and royal scribes, did not find their way into Strabo’s narrative at all. Thus, the details of the Roman administration of the country must be reconstructed from the documents. As the overwhelming majority of papyri come from the regions between Memphis and Hermopolis (including the Fayum), which were part of the *epistrategia* of the Heptanomia (“Seven Nomes”), we will start from this region in sketching the significant administrative changes in the whole country. The title of *epistrategos* was adopted by the Roman administration from the Ptolemaic system (Thomas 1975; see Chapter 7). The Heptanomia as *epistrategia* is attested from the end of Augustus’ reign onward (AD 11/12; Derda 2006, pp. 28–29). The unit comprising areas south of the Hermopolite nome, namely the *epistrategia* of the Thebaid, was presumably created at the same time. Lower Egypt (i.e. the Delta) was probably further subdivided into two more *epistrategiai*. These four units were headed by *epistrategoi* of equestrian rank belonging to the procuratorial body (Thomas 1982). Their competences included administrative matters connected mainly to the system of compulsory services (liturgies, see later). But their pivotal role probably consisted in the fact that it was to them that the prefect ceded his judicial competences in local matters.

The basic administrative units in the Roman Period were still the nomes. Their number changed with the course of time, the consecutive reorganizations consisting in joining smaller nomes to larger ones or in splitting larger nomes into smaller (e.g. in the part of the Nile Valley close to the Fayum, there existed for some time the Nilopolite nome, parceled from the northern part of the Herakleopolite). The average number of nomes was about 50, with 20-odd units in both Upper and Lower Egypt. A nome was headed by a *strategos*, as in Ptolemaic times (Hohlwein 1969). The royal scribe, *basilikos grammateus*, who had risen to the rank of *strategos*’ deputy, basically continued a homonymous Ptolemaic office, but with considerably extended competences (Kruse 2002).

Nomes in the Ptolemaic Period were divided into toparchies, headed by toparchs – officials who appear in the documents until the last decades of the first century AD. The competences of the toparchs were taken over gradually by the royal scribe of the nome, with only one symptomatic exception: the toparchies still constituted the basis of *sitologia*, or the system of gathering grain owed to the state as tax in kind or as rent for state-owned land (see later).

The smallest unit of administrative division in Roman Egypt was the village district: a *komogrammateia* (commune), headed by the village scribe or *komogrammateus*. One such district could comprise up to several villages (*komai*): in the 180s AD, a certain Petaus son of Petaus was the village scribe of Ptolemais Hormou, Kerkesoucha Orous, Syron Kome, Herakleonos Epoikion, Psenharyo (or Psinaryo), Tanchoiris, Exo Pseur, and Pharbaitha. In the same period, the *komogrammateia* in which an exceptionally large village, Karanis (northern Fayum), was located did not encompass any other *kome*, but only the hamlets dependent directly on Karanis. The village scribes were responsible for the collection of taxes in the area under their control; they also supervised the system of appointment of liturgical officials of the lowest rank. Their counterparts in the Egyptian *metropoleis* or nome capitals were the municipal scribes, *grammateis poleos*, in the Fayum, called *grammateis metropoleos*.

The feature that distinguished Egypt from other eastern provinces of the empire was the lack of *poleis*. Only four centers enjoyed *polis* status: initially Naucratis, Alexandria, and Ptolemais (see Chapter 7), and later Antinoopolis, a *polis* on the east bank of the Nile near Hermopolis Magna, created by the emperor Hadrian in AD 130 in honor of Antinoos (see earlier). The Egyptian cities (Alston 2002) were from time immemorial capitals of nomes (*metropoleis*), and until AD 200 they were (again according to the Roman administration) not Greek-style *poleis*. However, in the second century AD we perceive the process of formation of municipal institutions in Hermopolis Magna, Oxyrhynchos, and, to a lesser extent, Ptolemais Euergetis in the Fayum. It is in this context that we ought to see the bestowment of civic status on all nome capitals by Septimius Severus in AD 200/1: the emperor's decision only validated the actual state of affairs.

The realities of Egypt do not really fit with the standard “handbook-type” model of other provinces of the Roman East. The “cities” are not cities from the formal point of view (*poleis*), while on the other hand the villages (*komai*) have many urban features. The Fayum has towns with large temple precincts, public squares, and buildings of public utility (Karanis and Tebtynis above all, but also Bacchias, Philadelphia, Narmouthis, and Euhemeria). The paradoxical nature of this situation is well reflected in the title of an archeological monograph by Davoli (1998): *L'archeologia urbana nel Fayyum di età ellenistica e romana*.

4.7 The Liturgical System

The system of imposing public services on the whole masculine population of Egypt, a feature of the country under Roman rule (see Chapter 10), originated from several sources. From time immemorial, it was common practice for the countries of the Near East to force their inhabitants to work for their ruler (e.g. it was in this way that the

pyramids were built). The name of this system comes from Classical Athens, where the word *leitourgia*, meaning “work for the people,” referred to a fifth-century BC phenomenon whereby the elite held offices at their own expense. Funding an equipped warship for the *polis* and bearing the costs of staging drama performances were particular kinds of *leitourgia* – the most honorable, but also the most expensive. The Romans, on the other hand, knew *munera*, by which they understood not an obligation, but rather a sense of duty to bear the costs of public activity felt by people of a high social and material status.

In Roman Egypt, only the highest officials were paid by the state: the equestrian procurators such as the *epistrategoi*, the *strategoi* of the nomes, and the latter’s deputies, the royal scribes. The remaining offices became subject to the liturgical system, which flourished in the second and third centuries AD. This was shaped gradually, and incorporated a growing number of magistratures, down to the most humble functions in lesser villages and hamlets (e.g. the guarding of crops left in the fields). The reign of Trajan proved groundbreaking for the development of this institution: the emperor handed over the collection of taxes to liturgical officials, and in this manner eliminated decisively the tax farmers and their abusive practices.

The appointment of liturgical functionaries was a major concern of the administration, whose lower and middle levels were also composed of liturgists. Eligibility for a given office was determined by the level of income (*poros*) of the potential candidate. The highest officials of the province, including the prefect, were anxious about the reliability of income assessments; their aim was to secure the resources necessary to cover financial liabilities, should they be required. Only men were appointed to hold liturgical offices. Supposedly, the lower age limit was identical with the one applied in the case of poll tax liability (14 years); however, the youngest official of whom we know to date was 18 years old at the beginning of his tenure. The expiration of poll tax liability at the age of 62 did not relieve one from liturgical obligations, since we know of functionaries appointed at the age of 70. Belonging to a group of people exempt from liturgies was considered a privilege. Such groups were numerous, and consisted of Roman citizens (including veterans), the citizens of distinguished cities (Alexandria and Antinoopolis), priests, the representatives of learned professions (philosophers, rhetors (i.e. advocates), and doctors) and of professions with key meaning for the functioning of the province (e.g. people in charge of military supplies), fathers of five or more children, and the physically disabled.

Tenure lasted one or three years according to the liturgy. The procedure of appointment was usually commenced a few months before the beginning of tenure in order to leave nominees time for a possible appeal or to make any preparations necessary for office-holding. The responsibility for the proper course of the procedure rested with the nominator. If a higher authority found justified the protest of a nominee who claimed that he had been appointed against the law, the nominator was obliged, first and foremost, to indicate a substitute; he was also liable to financial penalty. For some offices, the nominator designated a larger (usually double) number of candidates and the functionary was chosen by lot (*kleros*) from among them. Certain changes were introduced into the system upon the establishment of city councils in the nome capitals and their elevation to the rank of *poleis* by Septimius Severus in AD 200/1. The candidates for civic magistratures of the bouleutic class were from this time onward designated by the councils, which made the Egyptian cities similar to *poleis* in other provinces of the Roman East.

The system of liturgies gradually engaged a growing number of people and showed a tendency toward degeneration. One can observe that with the passage of time, the nominations were made increasingly later – even after the tenure had begun – which of course hindered the procedure of appellation. It was perfectly natural that people wanted to avoid holding offices, which required not only labor and time, but frequently also financial expenses. A particular role was played by the officials supervising the system: the village scribes in *komogrammateiai*, the *grammateis poleos* in the nome capitals (in the Arsinoite called *grammateis metropoleos*), and the royal scribes on the nome level, together with the supreme local authority represented by the *strategoi*. One can easily imagine that these functionaries took pains not to assign the particularly burdensome liturgies to their families, friends, or those willing to pay for their benevolence. In order to prevent abuse and corruption, the Roman government sought to appoint the key functionaries from outside the milieus in which they were supposed to act. *Strategoi* and royal scribes were always appointed to serve outside their own nomes and the nomes where their properties were located (Tait 1922; Smolders 2005). Petaus son of Petaus, village scribe of Ptolemais Hormou and several other *komai* in the eastern part of the Fayum in AD 184–187, came from Karanis, a *kome* located several kilometers from the region of his activity. The reason for this is quite obvious: regardless of time and place, an outsider who is not bound by social and family ties ensures the proper functioning of a post, especially when it comes to the impartial appointment of candidates for liturgical offices. Whether or not this solution really worked is a separate issue. It probably did to some extent, although now and then we hear of various corrupt practices that occurred in the offices of village scribes.

The picture of the avoidance of liturgy by means of substitution or *anachoresis* that emerges from hundreds of documents from especially later Roman Egypt does not fully reflect the complex reality. An interesting document (SB XVI 12829) arranges the appointment of komarchs of Philadelphieia in the Arsinoite nome for three successive years: AD 286/7, 287/8, and 288/9. The acting official, Aurelius Hol, agrees to nominate Aurelius Cornelius as his successor on condition that Cornelius nominates Hol's brother to the post at the expiration of his term. It is therefore beyond doubt that in the Philadelphieia of the 280s, the office of komarch was desirable and the persons holding the post came from the same circle of family and friends; it must have given tangible benefits.

4.8 Controlling the Population and the *Laographia*

At the very beginning of their rule, the Romans instituted a rigorous control of the population, which resulted from the vital role played by the poll tax (*laographia*) in the exploitation of the province. Thanks to papyri, we can learn the details of this well-considered system (see Chapter 10). Its essence consisted in the census of inhabitants, carried out house by house (*kat' oikian apographe*) every 14 years from AD 19/20 until the mid-third century. This time interval was not accidental, since *laographia* was paid by all male Egyptians aged between 14 and 62 years. The census was supervised by the prefect; in P.Lond. III 904 (Sel.Pap. II 220), the prefect announces the commencement of the census and orders all people staying temporarily in Alexandria to return to their place of residence. After the announcement, every family – or, more precisely, every man being the

head of a family – filed an appropriate census return; these documents, of which over 300 survive today, are an absolutely unique source on the scale of the whole empire. Census returns are basically the only category of ancient sources suitable for demographical research (Bagnall and Frier 2006).

The returns served to update the lists of inhabitants necessary for the levy of poll tax. This included the deletion of the deceased, based on the death declarations of family members; about 100 such documents from Roman Egypt are known. The authorities were also informed in an official manner about the deaths of minors (*aphelikes*), because – by force of the intrinsic logic of the system – as individuals enumerated in formal census returns, they would appear on the list of people liable to poll tax upon reaching majority. The authorities meticulously verified the notices of death of taxpayers or of taxpayers *in spe*.

The lists of inhabitants were drawn and updated on the village level, or rather on the level of the village district (*komogrammateia*), and in the nome capitals. Collective lists of the populations of particular *komogrammateiai* were made on the nome level, whence the information was sent to the central administration in Alexandria. It is exactly the data from the prefect's office that Josephus is referring to when writing about the number of Egypt's inhabitants (see earlier).

Poll tax rates were not the same for everybody (see Chapter 10). They were highest in the Arsinoite nome (Fayum), probably because people there had access to the best developed and most effective irrigation system; the authorities likely also took into consideration that an average farmer in this nome cultivated much more land than anywhere else. Exempt from the poll tax were Roman citizens, metropolites, the priests of the most prominent temples, and non-Romans holding the highest offices accessible to them (but only during their tenure).

4.9 Economic and Monetary Policy

The extraordinarily fertile soil regularly watered by the River Nile was the source of Egypt's wealth. The rhythm of floods determined the character of its economy: regardless of the ruling dynasty, whether as an independent state or a province of an empire (Assyrian, Persian, or Roman), Egypt had always been an agricultural country. The Romans adopted from the Ptolemaic administration productive structures of organization of the agricultural produce, as well as trained and effective staff (Capponi 2005; Monson 2012b).

The element of continuity was therefore dominant, although the Roman administration introduced important changes in the functioning of the economy (see Chapter 16). First and foremost, the Romans intentionally changed the landowning structure by depriving the king and courtiers of land. This was an obvious thing to do; however, a similar move aimed against the temples was less self-understood and was part of a deliberately pursued policy. A considerable part of the confiscated land was put into private hands (see later). Changes in other sectors of the economy took a similar course. The Romans did not restore the system of rigorous control (monopoly) of, for example, oil production. In artisanal production, we find no cases of people being tied to a profession, which is characteristic of the Byzantine Period: birth did not determine a person's future occupation.

Contrary to the formerly expressed opinions, the economy of Egypt had been substantially monetized since the first century of Ptolemaic rule (von Reden 2007). Regardless, some products – mainly wine and olive oil – never ceased to be used as currency.

Within the empire, Egypt maintained its closed monetary system based on the activity of the Alexandrian mint (see Chapter 14). The principles of its functioning under the new rule were developed over half a century. The fact that during the 50 years after Actium only small bronze coins were struck in Alexandria can be interpreted either as reprisal or as mere caution and hesitation in view of the new reality. Not until Tiberius, in AD 19/20, was Alexandria returned the right to mint a silver coin, the tetradrachm, which, however, contained less silver than its Ptolemaic predecessor. Before long – possibly during Claudius' reign – a fixed conversion rate was established, which equated the tetradrachm to the Roman *denarius*. However, the value of the tetradrachm within the province was overestimated, which practically limited its circulation to Egypt and allowed the government to profit from the difference between the Egyptian and Roman currencies. A formal prohibition on the exportation of Egyptian money may have existed as well. Egypt kept its unique monetary system until AD 296, when the Alexandrian mint ceased to work in artificial isolation from the rest of the empire (Christiansen 2004).

4.10 Rome's Granary

Egypt under Roman rule had an exceptionally complex system of taxation, which produced tens of thousands of documents: tax receipts, lists of taxpayers, and so on. Its comprehensive research and presentation is an enormous task still awaiting a person daring enough to supplant the solid but long outdated monograph of Wallace (1938a) with a new one (see Chapter 10). The diversity of fiscal obligations in nature and in kind unsettles historians: How was it possible to orientate oneself in the complex reality of various land categories, crop types, taxes on various economical activities, and so forth?

The collection of taxes in kind (grain) was subject to particular supervision by the state. After all, Egypt was one of Rome's primary suppliers of grain, alongside Sicily, Sardinia, and North Africa in the West (Figure 4.2). The *sitologia* or "collecting of grain" was a centralized structure, as can be seen from the example of the Arsinoite nome, where the old administrative unit of the toparchy (otherwise practically non-existent in this particular nome in the Roman Period) was used in the process of gathering the grain. The farmer's duty was to deliver threshed and winnowed grain to the state granaries. The responsibility for the whole process of gathering and transporting grain lay with the *sitologoi* ("grain collectors") appointed to this function (liturgy) from among all the inhabitants, except those with the most limited means. The major part of grain reached the state granaries in the months immediately following the harvest, but its transportation took practically the whole year. The grain was stored in harbors on the Nile and in the channels (a special role was played by the channel that extended the Bahr Yusuf northward, by which the grain from the Middle Egyptian nomes, and especially from the Fayum, was shipped), whence – still under the supervision of the *sitologoi* – it was sent to Neapolis at Alexandria. The *sitologoi* guaranteed with their own property the amount and quality of grain delivered, leaving only a part of it on the way as provisions for military troops



Figure 4.2 Allegorical mosaic of Rome and its main provinces in a luxurious residence at Thysdrus in Roman Africa. Rome is represented as Athena Minerva holding a celestial globe (central medallion), while Egypt is personified as a woman holding a sistrum, a sacred musical instrument used in the worship of Egyptian goddesses (hexagon to the right) (El Jem, Tunisia, *Domus Africae*). Source: Image courtesy Guido Schepens.

(e.g. in Babylon). In Neapolis, the grain passed under the charge of a high-ranking equestrian official from the immediate entourage of the prefect, the *procurator Neas Poleos*, who was responsible for loading it on sea-ships dispatched to Rome. Roman people were excited when, in June, the Alexandrian ships arrived in the harbor of Puteoli. However, Egypt's grain export was scaled down when famine was imminent due to low Nile inundations; thus, in AD 99, Trajan had the fleet returned to feed the hungry Egyptians (Bonneau 1964, p. 324; Pliny, *Panegyricus* 31; P.Oxy. XLI 2958).

4.11 Changing Land Categories

One of the major changes in the landowning structure in Egypt under Roman rule was that more land – formerly held by the state or by temples – found its way into private hands. Thanks to papyrological documentation, we know the details of the land category system (its fundamental study is based on the Oxyrhynchite material: Rowlandson 1996). These (usually only the terminology) varied according to region, as shown by the land

registers preserved in large fragments and dated mostly to the second century AD. Roughly speaking, the land could be divided into (1) public land; (2) private land; (3) land of imperial estates; and (4) sacred land.

1. Public land was called *basilike ge* ("royal land"; the adjective "royal" remained in use in the Roman Period, as in the royal scribe's title, *basilikos grammateus*) or *demosia ge* ("public land"). Royal land was the real property that had belonged to the Ptolemaic crown and was still owned by the state and rented out. The difference between *basilike ge* and *demosia ge* is not clear; both terms, appearing in the same land registers, are treated similarly by the fisc. The highest land tax was imposed on public land.
2. Private land was designated in different ways: the terms used at the beginning of the Roman Period usually refer to its provenance, whereas later administrations seem to have preferred words describing its fiscal status. Into the first category falls the catoecic land: the plots (*kleroi*) originally granted by the Ptolemies to cavalrymen and soldiers of other ranks. *Kleroi* preserved their designations derived from the names of their first owners until the end of the third century AD, when they gradually gained topographic denominations; in the Roman Period, we find, for example, royal land (*basilike ge*) located in particular *kleroi*. The designation *katoikike ge* (or *klerouchike ge*, from *klerouchos*, a soldier presented by the king with a *kleros*) retained its technical meaning; from the owner's point of view, it was valuable land, burdened with the least liabilities toward the state. To the same category belonged also the land "bought (sc. from the state)," *ge eonemene*. Both catoecic land and the major part of *ge eonemene* were burdened with a tax in kind amounting to one artaba per aroura; hence, the diffusion from a certain moment onward of the term *ge monartabos*, which indicated the privileged fiscal status of the land.
3. In 30 BC, Octavian, by the right of the victor, sequestrated the estates of Cleopatra's courtiers. With this land, and the land confiscated by Cleopatra from the temples not long before, he remunerated his closest collaborators and family members. Thus were created the great estates, *ousiai*, owned by such prominent figures as Augustus' wife Livia, Maecenas, and later Seneca. A question that has not been satisfactorily answered concerns the similarity (or lack thereof) of the legal status of *ousiai* to that of the Ptolemaic *doreai* (of which the most famous was the one granted by Ptolemy II to his prime minister, Apollonios the *dioiketes*, and managed by Zenon; see Chapter 17). It is unclear whether *ousiai*, like *doreai*, were given in use without property rights and could be taken away at any moment on the *princeps*' command. Parássoglou (1978) found no proof that *ousiai* were anything else than the private property of their owners; according to Rathbone (1993), they were a part of Augustus' *patrimonium* and were presented to family members and favorites just like the Hellenistic *doreai*. *Ge ousiake* was either taxed at a low rate or completely exempt from land-tax.
4. "Sacred land" (*hiera ge*), or the estates belonging to the temples, still appears in the Roman land registers, but nowhere does it occupy a dominant position. The economical power of the Egyptian temples was curbed by Octavian at the very beginning of his rule, although as just mentioned, confiscations of temple-owned land had already been carried out by Cleopatra. In the registers, *hiera ge* is taxed at rates halfway between those imposed on private and public land.

As in Ptolemaic times, the categorization corresponding to property rights was combined with the categorization according to hydrological features (inundation). There were five main categories: (i) *chersos* (“dry land”); (ii) *abrochos* (“uninundated land”); (iii) *gebregmene* (“inundated (sc. regularly) land”); (iv) *embrochos* (“overinundated land”); and (v) *limne* (“pool of standing water left by the sea or river,” hence generally “land under water”) (Bonneau 1993). The inclusion of a plot into one of these categories had practical consequences for the owner/tenant, since it influenced the rate of fiscal liabilities. In theory, every year after the flood a special commission carried out the inspection of the land (*episkepsis*). The owners/tenants were particularly concerned about the procedure in the years of insufficient or excessive flooding.

4.12 Interactions in the Religious Sphere

At least until the end of the second century AD, the great Egyptian temples still organized traditional festivals, including solemn processions. Cult was gradually Hellenized, and Egyptian festivals were combined with the celebration of the imperial cult and with various civic ceremonies. As a result of Roman regulations, the temples lost much of their economical power, while the priests, from the time of Augustus onward, were subject to rigorous control of the state (Geraci 1983, pp. 185–187). All these facts notwithstanding, the rulers from remote Rome continued the extensive program of building traditional temples, both in the Nile Valley and in the oases of the Western Desert (which in Roman times enjoyed a period of true prosperity). The newly built edifices were adorned with Hieroglyphic inscriptions, which from time immemorial had been recording the deeds of the rulers, and the names of the emperors were inscribed in royal cartouches (Chapter 26).

Several Egyptian customs of the religious sphere were adopted by the incomers – both the descendants of the Greeks and Macedonians, and gradually also those who possessed Roman citizenship (Frankfurter 1998; see also Chapter 23). The funeral customs – and above all the mummification – practiced universally until Christian times proved especially appealing (the very same customs amazed and often disgusted those who looked at Egypt from a distance). Mummies were put into sarcophagi or mummy cases made of cartonnage (see earlier). The so-called Fayum portraits (Doxiadis 1995; Walker 2000) became a veritable symbol of the fusion of traditions in the funerary sphere. Around 900 such paintings are known from necropolises all over Egypt; they owe their name to the fact that the greatest number was discovered in the Fayum oasis, mainly in Hawara. The eldest examples date to the turn of the eras, the latest to the mid-third century AD. The portraits, depicting busts of the deceased, were attached with bandages to the mummy in the place of the face. They were executed in tempera or, more rarely, in encaustic, on wooden panels or plastered canvas. The Fayum portraits belong undoubtedly to the tradition of Greek art. The depictions dated to the first and second century AD are characterized by striking realism and high-quality painterly work. There are many indications that the portraits were executed in the models’ lifetime; for many years, they adorned their owners’ houses, before being placed on their mummies after their death.

4.13 Conclusion: Impact of Empire

In spite of the geographical and chronological limitations of our sources, the abundance of documents on papyri and ostraca allows us to reconstruct in detail the functioning of Egypt in the first three centuries of our era, which is unattainable for any other Roman province. In this context, the question arises whether the conclusions drawn from the Egyptian material can be extrapolated to other regions of the empire. The uniqueness of the country was unquestionable for the first generation of historians of Roman Egypt: the fact that the province was ruled by *equites* acting directly in the *princeps'* name; the separate monetary system; the lack of Greek-style *poleis*; the characteristic institutions typical for almost the whole eastern part of the empire – all these elements induced the opinion of a “Sonderstellung” or special position for Egypt. However, for more than half a century (Lewis 1970), this opinion has been in retreat (see Chapter 37). There is much indication that if we had more documents from other provinces – as many as for Egypt – we would also regard them as exceptional (Bowman 1976). In fact, documents from Arabia and Judea published more recently show many similarities with Egypt in respect of the functioning of the state and law. The “Roman-ness” of Roman Egypt became the dominant notion (Lewis 1984; Keenan 1982) in relation not only to the running order of the state and its administration, but also to the structure of great estates (Kehoe 1988, 1992).

FURTHER READING

For a comprehensive synthesis of the history of Roman Egypt, see Bowman (1986, 1996, 2005). For the crucial issue of the transition from Ptolemaic to Roman Egypt, see Geraci (1983), Capponi (2005), Monson (2012b), and Haensch (2008b). A thorough analysis of the position of the *praefectus Aegypti* by Jördens (2009) is to be read with Haensch (2010) and Alston (1995) on the imperial army in Egypt. Still valuable is Lewis (1983). Two important papers summarizing the discussion on Egypt and how it was governed by the Romans are Jördens (2013) and Rathbone (2013).

CHAPTER FIVE

Egypt in the Byzantine World

Cornelia Römer

5.1 Becoming Part of the Byzantine World

For the dock workers in the harbor of Alexandria, it cannot have made a big difference when, in the middle of the fourth century, ships stopped heading to the west and toward Rome with their loads of grain – the wealth of the country of Egypt, paid as taxes – but to the north and toward the newly founded city of Constantinople. In the Byzantine Period, Egypt continued to be a country under a foreign government that exploited its abundant natural resources. Its wealth benefitted mostly those abroad, and less those living in the country – a situation the Egyptians continued to experience well into the twentieth century.

The “Byzantine world” that arose after the foundation of Constantinople by Constantine the Great in AD 330 was still very much in its beginnings during the period in which Egypt belonged to it; the close relations between the two in all aspects of religion, culture, and art were finally and systematically broken by the Arabs, who took the country in 639–642. In that period of c. 300 years, the Christian religion advanced as the universally accepted medium for salvation (although pagan cults and practices continued in some intellectual circles in the cities, as well as in the countryside); this period experienced continuous struggles over the right understanding about how to reach that salvation, involving bishops, emperors, and – increasingly – monks. In this time, the Byzantine Empire suffered numerous threats from outside its borders, in particular from the Avars and Persians; Constantinople and Egypt were both deeply involved, and Egypt was finally taken by the Persians in 619 (even though it had been unbothered up till then), and remained under their rule for 10 years.

In this early “Byzantine world,” the stage was set for Constantinople to reassert itself in its relations with the west and the former Roman Empire, while Egypt – and in particular Alexandria – struggled to maintain its former supremacy in the Eastern Mediterranean. Both cities were global players in the formation of that world, the one in the east as the seat of the emperor, the one in the south as the center of learning and a long-lasting tradition of wisdom.

This chapter will focus on only some aspects of the relationship between Constantinople and Egypt (or, rather, Alexandria). The imbalance in the quality and, indeed, quantity of literary sources, arts, and inscriptions from Constantinople, which feature mostly its ruling class, and the rich evidence from Egyptian papyri, which sometimes deal with the most humble people in the villages, does not facilitate this enterprise.

5.2 Constantinople, the New Rome

How did the newly founded city of Constantinople and its empire see itself, and what impact did this self-image have on its provinces, including Egypt? Later, I will ask how Egypt saw itself, and how it was seen from Constantinople.

One of the main features of Constantinople’s self-image was its interest in modeling itself after the Old Rome in Italy, aiming to be seen as the New Rome that followed in the footsteps of the Roman Empire, with all its grandeur. Over the centuries, this is a recurrent motive in poetry and historiography (Cameron 2009). A famous example marking a culmination of this concept may be seen in the description of the vestment of Justinian’s coffin in the panegyric on his successor Justin II by Corippus in AD 565, in Latin hexameters. On the vestment, Corippus (*Justinian* I 288–90) depicts the female figure of the Old Rome (*antiqua Roma*), calling her the “lofty parent of empire and liberty,” and addressing the place of the funeral – Constantinople, of course – as the New Rome (*Justinian* I 344; III 156, etc.). The idea of seeing Constantinople as a second Rome is entertained already in the fourth century, not long after the foundation of the city on the Bosphorus by the pagan orator Themistius in his speech to the emperor Theodosius (see the edition by Downey and Schenkl 1969, p. 184A; Bowersock 2009). Taken seriously by the rulers and their entourage, the consequence of this “Romanness” was the inclination to foster knowledge of the Latin language and to strengthen the consciousness of Roman traditions. Both seem to culminate in the sixth century under Justinian. These phenomena are visible in the culture promoted and lived in the high echelons of Constantinople’s society and in other centers of the empire. In those centers, the world of the Eastern Mediterranean had become more “Roman” than ever before.

In Egypt, we have to look at bits and pieces of fragmentary papyrus rolls and sheets, hoping to find hints to the ideas that were popular in Constantinople and transported by famous poets, historians, or artists. The increasing inclination toward “Romanness” was present also here.

What we see in the papyri from the fourth century onward is the extensive use of Latin vocabulary in the administration of the country; titles which, under Roman rule, were always Greek, would now be in Latin – but written with Greek letters, because the language used in nearly all areas of administration and public life continued to be Greek.

Under the Romans, the Latin language had been nearly exclusively the domain of the military. Now, Latin was used more and more in the courts and in legal procedures. In daily life, three letters from Oxyrhynchos that were written in Greek, most likely by a monk who signed his text in Latin, would in earlier centuries have been unusual for whoever sent them (P.Oxy. XVIII 2193, 2194 and P.Köln IV 200, dated to the fifth/sixth century). This monk cited also the Old Testament in Latin. Altogether, a certain increase in the use and knowledge of Latin and of Latin authors can be observed in the number of texts written in that language (Maehler 1998). Statistically, Virgil's *Aeneid* and *Georgica* rise from only two attestations between AD 100 and 300, to 21 between AD 300 and 700. These numbers include citations in school texts and the like, as well as parts of manuscripts. Livy has only three attestations over the whole period of the first 700 years AD, the most striking being the fragment of a parchment codex found in the monastery of Naqlun in the southern Fayum oasis, dated to the fifth century (*Ab urbe condita* 11 (first attestation), see the edition by Bravo and Griffin 1988), another dated to the fourth century (P.Oxy. XI 1379). Here, the inclination to promote the Latin language and literature, as well as the idea of the grandeur of the Roman past, becomes evident in the eastern provinces in Late Antiquity. It would be wonderful if we could have any clue of what books were kept in the library of the family of the Apiones (see Chapters 16 and 18). Besides their commercial activities at their estate in Oxyrhynchos and their connections to the court in Constantinople, this is a missing link that would give us a more complete picture of the elite in the countryside to which the Apiones belonged. Reading Latin literature may have been part of the leisurely entertainment of this class. After the sixth century, a rapid decline in the numbers of Greek and Latin texts can be observed in the overall statistics of papyrological evidence in Egypt (compare Chapter 19; for the Latin language and literature, see also Chapter 31).

5.3 Constantinople and Egypt: Mutual Contacts and Interests

On the other hand – and here a problem may have arisen immediately – Egypt continued to see itself as very special: as the country of wisdom, marvels, and extreme riches. Christianity did not change that notion. What did Egypt represent for those who ruled in Constantinople, and for others in the Eastern Mediterranean who at least knew about the country on the Nile?

From the early days of contacts between the people in the Eastern Mediterranean in the eighth century BC, Egypt was famous above all for its wealth of natural resources and its technical knowledge (cf. *Iliad* 9.381–385; *Odyssey* 4.120–137), and later, when the contacts grew closer, for its remarkable religion, its wisdom, and its enigmatic river (Herodotus, Book II). While the enormous wealth created by its grain resources made it a desirable prize for conquerors like Alexander and Augustus, the religious particularities time and again attracted travelers from all over the then known world, who wanted to see the crocodile god approaching in full attire of jewelry and being fed by priests, to witness the wisdom of those priests, and to gaze at the marvels of the River Nile when it once a year flushed the entire country. The natural prosperity made Egypt the breadbasket of the Roman Empire, while the religion and the river made it a popular destination.

Under the rule of Constantinople, ships laden with wheat continued to leave the harbor of Alexandria, but now in the direction of the New Rome in the north. On their way back toward Egypt, they carried travelers, merchants, and pilgrims. From the time of Herodotus, who visited the country on the Nile in the fifth century BC, the desire to see Egypt's marvels remained unbroken across the years. In Egypt, one could admire two of the seven wonders of the world, the canon of which had been drawn up in Hellenistic times: the pyramids at Giza and the lighthouse of Alexandria. Generations of upper-class Romans, including Julius Caesar, Marc Antony, and a number of emperors, gazed at these marvels, or listened to the voices whispering from the colossus of Memnon across the river from today's Luxor. The wisdom of the priests, which had attracted Solon to spend his exile here, became somewhat less interesting for the rich and powerful who visited Egypt in the Roman Period, but their admiration for the antiquity of its culture remained unrivaled, as can be seen in the writings of Plutarch in the second century AD. The yearly spectacle of the Nile flood was still an enigma and a source of geographical and philosophical speculation (see Aelius Aristides' speech on Egypt, *Αἰγύπτιος λόγος*, in the edition by Keil 1898; English translation by Behr 1981). In the meantime, certain Egyptian cults, in particular those of Isis and Osiris, had become extremely popular in Italy and elsewhere, and created an Egyptomania, which added to the fascination of the land.

With the rise of Christianity, the interest in visiting the country did not decrease – far from it. Whereas before it had been the wonders of the world, the animal cults, and the wisdom of the priests, it was now the hermits and their extraordinary asceticism that attracted impressive numbers of visitors from all over the Mediterranean and beyond. The hairy and emaciated figures who lived in caves on steep hillsides, secluded from the world by miles of desert, were time and again the destination of believers (see Figure 5.1). The tone of descriptions of such visits was set in the late fourth century by the so-called *Historia Monachorum*, a travelogue written in Greek by an anonymous author who was apparently a Latin speaker. He set out in AD 394 with six other men from the Monastery of the Mount of Olives in Palestine, and first reached the area of Asyut in Upper Egypt (Greek Text in Festugière 1961; English translation by Russell 1981). The book was pretty soon translated into Latin by Rufinus of Aquileia (c. 340–410), and contributed enormously to the popularity of Egyptian asceticism in the East and West. Not much later, Palladius of Galatia wrote down the stories of the Desert Fathers at the request of Theodosius II's chamberlain Lausus, in the so-called *Historia Lausiaca* (edition in Butler 1889–1904; English translation by Meyer 1964). The more folkloristic *Apophthegmata Patrum* ("Sayings of the Desert Fathers") followed in its vein.

The holy men encountered in these travelogs have predictive gifts, as illustrated by the stories of the visitors themselves, or by those told to them of previous visits. Striking is the high number of officials who are said to have received great assistance after meeting the holy men; those of the imperial government in Constantinople seem to have been in contact throughout with Apa Shenoute, the charismatic abbot of the White Monastery at Sohag (Behlmer 1998, pp. 341–371, with appendices; see also Chapter 29); however, we do not hear that personalities of the absolutely highest rank came to Egypt, such as the Empress Eudocia, who traveled instead to the Holy Land. The reason for this abstinence may be found in the dogmatic struggles arising in Alexandria, which in the stories of the more humble visitors of the countryside never play any role; the holy men in the desert were above them.



Figure 5.1 The mountain at Naqlun, where monks dwelled in caves from the fifth century onward, overlooking the fertile plain of the south-western Fayum oasis. Source: Image courtesy Cornelia Römer.

Common to most of the encounters is the remoteness of the hermits, and the description of how to reach them. Egypt was the destination, and within Egypt there was a long journey to be made. In the imagination of the people of the fourth to sixth centuries, the land on the Nile was no longer just the inhabited valley of the river, but the country as a whole, with all its deserts and their inhabitants, who held out with their ascetic virtues in the dangerous environment.

Alexandria tried to have its share in the business of pilgrimage to Egypt, and not to leave it completely to Abu Mina to the west or to Oxyrhynchos and Antinoe in Upper Egypt (see later). According to a legend preserved in the *Life of John the Little*, Theophilus, patriarch of Alexandria, who had just allowed the Serapeum of the city to be destroyed in 391, managed to have a shrine dedicated there to the Three Youths in the Furnace (Daniel 3: 1–30); despite the fact that the bones of the three had to remain in Ktesiphon, a miracle that occurred at just the right time assured the believers that the three boys were among them, and in that very newly built shrine, even without their remains being stored there (*Life of John the Little* 75, edition by Amélineau 1894; English translation by Mikhail and Vivian 1997, pp. 17–64, in particular 49–50; cf. Frankfurter 2005a). Thus, Alexandria *ad Aegyptum* offered not only the entrance to the miraculous world of the hermits, but her

own share of holy places dedicated to biblical figures of the utmost importance, like John the Baptist, Elisha, and the Three Youths in the Furnace.

Besides the holy men, there was yet another great attraction in traveling to Egypt that added both to the strong self-concept of the country and to the particular view others had of it. As the New Testament assured, Jesus had spent some of his childhood here, when Herod threatened to kill all newborns (Matthew 2: 13–15). In a Coptic text of the fourth or fifth century, which appears as a prophecy, Egypt is addressed as the place where “all the trees of the paradise are planted, where the sun shines more than in any other country, where 3721 martyrs will suffer death, and where the son of God will live for 3 years and 11 months” (P.Köln VIII 353). Egypt is perceived as the holy place par excellence in the early Christian world – for some, even more so than Jerusalem. John Chrysostomus (347–407), Archbishop of Constantinople from 397, praised the country fervently in his eighth *Homily on Matthew* (VIII 4–5; Migne, *Patrologia Graeca*, 57, 86–90). In the capital, the claim of Egypt’s spiritual leadership was well known.

This fame supported the rise of some internationally renowned destinations for pilgrimage: to Antinoe in Upper Egypt, where the tomb of St. Kollouthos could be visited beside impressive churches, and in particular to what is nowadays called Abu Mina, to the west of Alexandria, where St. Menas had his tomb. Both of these hot spots offered healing by incubation close to the shrine of the saint, continuing long-lasting traditions of the Greek world (see also Chapter 28). Most successful was the center around the tomb of St. Menas. According to the legend, on the spot where Menas, a soldier of the Roman army, was buried after being decapitated for his faith in 303, a church was built under the emperors Valentinian and Valens between 364 and 378. The miracles performed by the saint – the holy water that could be carried away in little bottles bearing his image between two camels, which have been found all over the Mediterranean – made this destination a favorite for those entering Egypt by ship via Alexandria, or coming from the Holy Land and taking a detour to the west. From the late fifth to the first half of the sixth century, Abu Mina’s Great Basilica was the largest church in Egypt, and the most attractive center of devotion besides the Desert Fathers. Fully developed only in the seventh or eighth century, but already popular in the fifth and sixth, the places in which the Holy Family had allegedly rested also became stations on the travel routes of the faithful. Upstream to the area of Asyut, new attractions emerged for visitors. Egypt had a lot to offer! (MacCoull 1995; Ovadiah 1995; for the more legendary view, see Tomoum 2010).

There was also a regular movement of people from Egypt to Constantinople – notable not so much in terms of numbers, but more in terms of its economic and cultural importance. The legendary sphere has the example of Shenoute traveling on a cloud to the city on the Bosphorus to see Emperor Theodosius in his bedroom, discuss urgent matters with him, and return on the same night to the monastery at Atriye, modern Sohag (Besa, *The Life of Shenoute* 53–67; English translation by Bell 1983, pp. 57–61). The saint’s wondrous voyage was observed by farmers in the fields. More mundane travelers took ships from Alexandria, on a trip that would have lasted at least 18 days – perhaps a little less on the return (18 days is the measure indicated in the eleventh century for a voyage between Alexandria and Constantinople, see Goitein 1967, p. 326; the trip from Constantinople to Alexandria may have been shorter due to the Etesian winds, which usually blew from north to south, see Casson 1973, pp. 283–285). For people in the capital and elsewhere in the empire, Egypt was not out of the world; conversely, this was also true for those living on the Nile.

5.4 Alexandria, Cradle of Religious Controversies

Alexandria was the natural main entrance to the country, through which people, goods, and ideas arrived, and others left. The geographical layout of Egypt guaranteed this special role to the city, which had existed since its foundation and first opening toward the Mediterranean – even if, since the Roman Period, harbors on the Red Sea had gained some importance as gates to Upper Egypt for those coming from Arabia, Mesopotamia, and India. Alexandria *ad Aegyptum*, not *in Aegypto*, continued to be this special city, with a remarkable proportion of the upper stratum of society residing there, as compared to the countryside upstream. Perhaps its role can be compared with that of Paris or Vienna many centuries later: residences of kings and emperors, and capitals of large countries, with exceptional intellectual and economic influence.

However, Alexandria's special position was now being challenged by Constantinople and the court residing in that city. At the same time, its worldly power received a rival in the Christian Church and its prominent leaders. The struggle between these powers was to be fought out during the coming centuries, not only in Asia Minor, Syria, and close to Constantinople, but also and foremost in Alexandria.

The close ties between Constantinople and Alexandria were overshadowed time and again by religious controversies. It is true that it was mostly from Egypt that these controversies arose, in two major movements originating in the time before the founding of Constantinople. What was called "Arianism" spread over the Mediterranean from Alexandria, and later the controversy about the "Natures" of Christ started here and led to the split in 451 of the Egyptian ("Coptic") Church from the rest of the "orthodox" Church of the Christian East. However, the pioneering task of Alexandria in the fourth and fifth centuries in its attempt to define the "right" belief must be seen not only as a struggle of theologians for the right way to salvation, but certainly also as a struggle to maintain the former supremacy of Alexandria in the Eastern Mediterranean world. Christians felt this supremacy on account of Egypt's special status (as the country where Jesus had spent his childhood; see earlier), and the existence of the catechetical school in which some of the most influential and charismatic personalities of the early Christian Church taught: Clement, Origen, and, later, Didymus the Blind.

Alexandria was not ready to give up its supremacy in the Mediterranean; however, even when the persecutions of the Christians were still ongoing, it was within Egypt that a first contention broke out, over how to deal with those who had been weak in the persecutions and had sacrificed to the pagan gods under pressure. In truth, this dispute was about the supremacy of the Alexandrian Church within Egypt (Griggs 1993, pp. 121–122; Bell 1924 (= P.Lond. VI), pp. 38–99). While Peter, Archbishop of Alexandria, and his successor were ready to be lenient and to readmit the *lapsi* ("the fallen ones") to the Church, his opponent Melitius, a bishop from Lykopolis (Asyut), did not consent to have them baptized, at least not without a lengthy waiting period. Melitius started to ordain priests and bishops throughout the country who shared his strict opinion. By doing so, he challenged the leading role of the Church of Alexandria, which decided to excommunicate the Melitians and their leaders. Nevertheless, there were still followers of Melitius in the sixth century; at any rate, they called themselves so (McGing 1990; sale of a monk's cell in the Arsinoite in 511) – whether they understood the origin of the group they adhered to at that late time is not certain, and in which teachings they differed from the rest of the

Christian congregations is unclear. There were no such movements in other parts of the Eastern Mediterranean (for an overview of the most recent research, see Hauben 2004). Initially, the Melitians were accused of having mixed with the followers of Arius, but they may have joined together only in a common cause against the strong new patriarch of Alexandria, Athanasius, who was elected under questionable circumstances in 328 (Griggs 1993, p. 125).

The matter of Arius and his teachings was of a more theological and, indeed, political nature: it challenged time and again the relationship between the emperors and the Alexandrian see. With Athanasius, a most fervent and reckless champion of the “orthodox,” anti-Arian creed had come to the episcopal throne (for Athanasius, see Gwynn 2012). Constantine’s efforts to reconcile the parties failed in Nicaea in 325, and Athanasius allowed himself to be made the plaything of the emperors ruling over the West and East, respectively. While Constantine II, an adherent of the Nicaean creed, was emperor in the West (from 337), he informed the Church of Alexandria that Athanasius was to be welcomed back from his exile in Treves (Trier), where he had been sent by Constantine; the reason for that exile was his refusal to welcome Arius back into Alexandria in 336. From 356, Athanasius had to hide in the monasteries of the desert, for Constantius II, who was sympathetic with Arius and his teachings, had now become the ruler of the whole empire. Ultimately, it was the support of the monks that allowed Athanasius to survive; all his life, he had not only been interested in their ascetic lifestyle (exercising it himself to some degree), but had also cleverly advanced their strength by writing a miraculous biography of Antony, honoring his way of life and encouraging others to follow in his footsteps – including those outside Egypt. In the figure of Antony, he had found a model for bringing together the Egyptian monks, the Alexandrians, and even the ruling class of Constantinople. Athanasius’ biography of the wise man in the desert marks the turning point of an ideal: whereas before, there had been the distinguished wise philosopher (pagan or Christian) who gained his reputation from learning and from the *academic* knowledge of Classical tradition, there was now the distinguished wise man who gained his reputation without such an education, being “wise” only in his knowledge of the holy scriptures, his asceticism, and – implicitly – his renunciation of academic study (Watts 2006, pp. 170–175).

The struggle in which Athanasius found himself was triggered by the teachings of Arius, a man with a “Classical” education, who had become presbyter in Alexandria in 313. What he taught may have seemed to be more “reasonable” in the traditional way of thinking than the orthodox view: “There was a time, when He (the son of God) was not” (Sozomen, *Historia ecclesiastica* 1.5); more elaborately: “The Word was a creature of God, susceptible to change, although superior to all other creatures.” Athanasius contradicted this view: “The Word was fully divine and was not changed when inhabiting the human body” (Griggs 1993, p. 136). The armor used against Arius in Nicaea in 325, the non-scriptural and rather philosophical expression *homoousios* (“of the same substance”), did not solve the problem, although it still tried to combine the two worlds, which were drifting further and further apart. For those who had been educated quite recently in a monotheistic religion, the idea of two (the holy spirit was not yet an issue) divine entities of the same substance seems to have been difficult to accept; to others, the controversy was a welcome tool in an environment where religious issues became increasingly political.

Egypt was the center of all of this, and remained so in the century to come, rivaling Constantinople.

Following the Arian dispute, interest in doctrinal issues increased, with political consequences. In Constantinople, the Arians were in control, and they became more influential in Alexandria after the death of Athanasius in 373. Nevertheless, Athanasius' successor, Peter, tried to have a say in the capital by promoting his candidate – obviously a follower of the Nicæan creed – for the bishopric there. By the end of the fourth century, however, the battle for supremacy between Alexandria and Constantinople seems to have been decided in favor of Constantinople, when in 381 a council was called together in that city. In the third canon of that council, it was clearly specified that “the Bishop of the city of Constantinople was to have the prerogative of honor after the Bishop of Rome, because that city is the New Rome” (cited in Socrates, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 5.8).

In Alexandria, Archbishop Theophilus tried to consolidate his relationship with the monasteries in order that he would have his back free for the struggles to come. He did not prevent rioting monks from destroying the Sarapeum, for which he certainly earned their loyalty. His successor, Cyril of Alexandria, was ready to fight even more strenuously for the supremacy – or, at least, independence from Constantinople – of the Alexandrian see. In the tense atmosphere of this period, the philosopher Hypatia was murdered in 415, the Jews were driven out of the city, and the prefect Orestes, the representative of the Byzantine court, was injured by a rioting mob of monks, who threw stones at him. Emperor Theodosius II responded with an edict that forbade clerics to take part in public affairs. Very soon, a new dispute broke out, this time over the word *theotokos* (“Mother of God”); the main protagonists were Cyril of Alexandria and Nestorius of Antioch. The dispute widened into christological questions in general, and produced the “expression of the year” in Alexandria: “Two natures in One Christ” (Nestorius emphasized instead the two separate natures in Christ).

Since the emperor at Constantinople, Theodosius II, and his wife were on the side of Nestorius, this dispute too had a political connotation. When Cyril excommunicated Nestorius, the emperor tried to reconcile the two men, and called for the Council of Ephesus in 431, without much success. The participation of Shenoute – the powerful and charismatic abbot from the White Monastery in Upper Egypt – in Cyril's entourage showed how much power the monasteries now wielded. When finally Cyril's successor on the see of Alexandria, Dioscorus, participated in the Council of Chalcedon in 451, he had just excommunicated the pope at Rome, Leo, accusing him of Nestorianism. The emperor Marcian demanded a new creed be drawn up, in which the nature of Christ was defined beyond the old creeds of Nicæa and Constantinople. This new creed defined Christ as existing “in two natures, without confusion, without change, without division, without separation.” Dioscorus could not accept this. He was sent into exile, accused of contumacious conduct in excommunicating the pope at Rome. The “New Rome” sided explicitly with the “Old Rome,” and against Alexandria (see earlier). The Egyptian Church split from the rest of the Christian churches.

As Sellers (1953, p. 125) states: “Theophilus, Cyril, and Dioscorus had governed Eastern Christendom like ‘second pharaohs’ but at Chalcedon the pretensions of the Alexandrian see came to an end.” On the other hand, with the Council of Chalcedon, a certain independence from imperial control had been achieved. Still, there continued to

exist followers of the Chalcedonian creed, the community of the Melchites (Imperial Church) of Egypt. Not immediately, but very soon, there were two patriarchs in Alexandria, showing the schism not only in the belief, but also in the organization of the Church. The flight of Severus of Antioch, who was accused of Monophysitism, to Egypt in 518 gave the Egyptian Church further self-confidence. Here, Severus would be venerated as a saint.

However, the splitting from Constantinople in theological concerns led not only to a separate church in the land on the Nile, but also to a more and more visible de-Hellenization, which had already begun in the time of Athanasius (see earlier). As late as the 380s, Euvagrius Ponticus and the “Tall Brothers” had been impressive figures in the desert, with a thorough Classical education in philosophy. Now, the old culture that had dominated Egypt since the Ptolemaic Period was sinking.

5.5 Alexandria, a Global Cultural Trendsetter

Nevertheless, the mostly pagan philosophical schools in Alexandria continued to attract students from all over the Mediterranean, including Constantinople, far into the sixth century (see, for the following, Watts 2006, pp. 204–256). Ammonius, born c. 440, a pupil of the Neoplatonist Proclus, and Olympiodorus were pagans lecturing on Plato and Aristotle. While Justinian closed the school at Athens in 529, Olympiodorus, who had written commentaries on the *Gorgias* and other Platonic dialogues, still taught in Alexandria as late as 565. Some students learning here were baptized, and Christians in that sense; others were not. The balancing act of lecturing on the “eternity of the world,” as believed by Christians, and the Aristotelian claim that “there can only be a finite quantity of things in the world” seemed nearly impossible (how could there be an eternal world, if everything in it was finite?); however, time and again, the heads of the school in Alexandria succeeded in avoiding major clashes and remaining “religiously neutral,” a virtue apt to their profession as philosophers in the old meaning of the word. The foundation in the 520s of a Christian school by John Philoponus, whose main interest was to rival Olympiodorus, did not lead to an end of the pagan school (Philoponus’ name suggests a close relation to the group of “philoponoi” who supported Christian teaching in pagan philosophy; see Watts 2006, pp. 213–216).

Archeological remains of more than 20 lecture halls, excavated over the last 30 years or so at Kom el-Dikka in Alexandria by Polish teams, show the impressive extent to which learning was offered in Late Antique Alexandria. These lecture halls are certainly dated to a time after Hypatia – to the beginning of the sixth century (see the volume by Derda et al. 2007; Sorabji 2010, Introduction). Most likely, in addition to philosophy and mathematics, grammar, rhetoric, law, and medicine were also taught here – the curriculum for which the “University” of Constantinople had been founded in 425, although it never became as popular as the school at Alexandria.

Medicine, which advanced so much during the Ptolemaic Period in Alexandria, was still exercised in theory and practice, dominated by the Galenic system (Duffy 1984; Pormann 2010). A leading figure in the sixth century was Gesius.

In the fifth and sixth centuries, as long as the conflicting parties remained quiet, Alexandria must have been a wonderfully interesting place for intellectuals and those who

had a free mind. There was so much to think about: the Chalcedonian creed (was it “reasonable?”), pagan philosophy (what could it still offer?), and all the other “creeds.” Students remained into the seventh century.

Farther to the south, some of the former nome capitals also continued to flourish; in Oxyrhynchos, Antinoopolis, Hermopolis, and Panopolis, provincial elites had established comfortable environments for a life of more or less moderate luxury. Some of these elites were prepared to take on responsibilities, stepping up to high ranks in the administration of the empire, and keeping close ties with the governing class in Constantinople, as the Apiones did (see Chapter 18).

Besides a newly developing political elite, Panopolis in Upper Egypt produced the most distinguished poets of the Greek language in the fifth century (for the cultural environment of that time, between Christianity and paganism, see Cameron 2007), although none of them stayed there (see Box 6.1). Cyrus of Panopolis became Pretorian and City Prefect in Constantinople in 426; a poet (Encomium on Theodosius II) and builder (Church of the Theotokos in Constantinople, plus the restoration of other buildings), he had a splendid career before he was accused of paganism (?) in 441 and exiled to Phrygia, where he became a bishop in Cotiaeum (van der Horst 2012). Nonnus (c. 400–470) soon moved to Alexandria, where he produced a paraphrase of St. John’s Gospel, obviously being a Christian; his creed did not stop him from writing an epic on Dionysus, which consisted of more hexameters than the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* together (on the *Dionysiaca* as the work of a Christian writer, see Cameron 2007, pp. 36–38). Pamprepicus (440–484) studied in Alexandria before becoming a pupil of Proclus in Athens; he remained a pagan, and is even reported to have thought about a revolt against the Emperor Zeno. His poems (of which an epyllion on the hours of the day and relative activities survives, as well as other fragmentary works) follow in the footsteps of Nonnus. Not only famous poets were born in Panopolis: the alchemist Zosimus (born c. 300; Lindsay 1970), a gnostic, became equally well known.

Other centers of the old culture based on the Classics were Hermopolis (Andronicus) and Koptos (Christodorus). In Aphrodito (today Kom Ishqaw), Dioskoros wrote his encomia on high officials in Egypt, introducing many of the heroes and gods of the past as shining examples (see Chapter 25).

These allusions are decorative rather than devotional, as are corresponding scenes in the art of the time. Heroes and gods of the past populated wall hangings, dresses, and mosaics. Neither the wealthy citizens who ordered such dresses, nor the weavers who produced them were afraid of using motifs from the Hellenistic and Roman past; Greek mythology (the labors of Hercules and dancing maenads) was popular on shrouds of the fourth to fifth centuries and later – I believe that in this time, a Christian could easily have worn a T-shirt with Hercules woven on it. In addition to woven images, the lack of any reservation against the pagan myths is equally striking in reliefs on stone, as found in grave houses from Hermopolis. The presentation of Leda in loving embrace with the swan surely does not point to a pagan owner of a tomb, but underlines their affiliation to the upper strata of society, in which the knowledge of the old pagan myths (but only the Hellenistic and Roman ones, not the pharaonic) formed part of one’s education. People from those echelons would enjoy reading about the old gods and goddesses, as they enjoyed looking at images representing them. As the hexameter encomium for the accession of the throne of

Justin II by Corippus, who used the vocabulary and imagery of Classical Latin poetry, referred back to the old grandeur of the Roman Empire without being suspected of being pagan (see earlier), so too did the imagery in Egyptian tombs (and elsewhere) reflect the popularity of the myths and heroes of the past. Again, however, we never find any pharaonic motifs. It seems that with the victory of the Christian Church over the old pagan – or, in the case of Egypt, the old pharaonic – religion, the design iconography of that religion became obsolete, but motifs from the less popular pagan or Classical Greco-Roman religion remained acceptable, even when gods were depicted.

Thus, Egypt was very much in step with other parts of the Byzantine Empire, leaving out its own very specific – pharaonic – vocabulary of forms and images. Of course, we know very little about textiles from Asia Minor and elsewhere, but particular patterns found in Egypt that are repeated in mosaics from outside the country show a close relation in style and vocabulary, as for instance between the mosaic of Misis Mopsuestia in Cilicia and a rug fragment from Egypt, supposedly from Antinoopolis (Stauffer 1995, cat. no. 54, figs. 5 and 6).

The extent to which Egypt was part of the global understanding of traditions is visible not only in poetry and art, but also in architecture and its decorative elements. Church architecture of both areas has been thoroughly researched in recent decades (Grossmann 2007). There is no doubt that the earliest churches – not only in Egypt – took their shape from the *basilica forensis*, the Roman market hall. Their layout, with three naves and an ambulatory all around the interior, repeats itself in the church architecture of the Constantine era – and before, as seen in the very few preserved examples. It seems that the first congregations followed this model deliberately when they were building the space in which to meet and be close to God; they pointedly avoided the model of the pagan temple, be it the Hellenistic or the Egyptian one. They chose the pattern of a secular building, as it had been introduced by the foreign rulers of the past. In Egypt, the elimination of any pattern of the old pharaonic religion became a hallmark of the so-called Coptic art that was now developing (see earlier).

A specific influence on the church architecture in Egypt by the ideas of Constantinopolitan builders is more clearly visible in the sixth century under Justinian, represented for example by two of the churches in Abu Mina, west of Alexandria; as in Syria, Asia Minor, and even the Balkans, we here encounter the type of the “tetraconche” church, a sacred space with large apses in each of the four directions. The newly discovered church at Pelusium (Tell el-Farama), already built at the end of the fourth/early fifth century, shows an archetype of that architecture, the origins of which are still being discussed (for a general discussion of the churches in Pelusium, see Bonnet 2011).

Decorative patterns, such as the interchange of rectangular and semicircular niches, as seen for instance in the church of Shenoute’s monastery near Sohag, follow Classical Roman patterns, as the forms of the capitals are designed according to eastern Roman models. Most of these capitals are developed out of the Corinthian order: never is a capital copied from a column of a pharaonic temple. Neither is the church of the monastery of Shenoute near Sohag built in the form of a pharaonic temple, as has been argued for a long time. Its outer appearance with sloping walls is in fact typical of any Egyptian building of the past (Grossmann 2002b).

The same is true of the form and the decoration of any sculptures found in buildings, at least in the city of Oxyrhynchos; here, recent research shows that “form and decoration

followed the patterns of the Ptolemaic and Imperial traditions, while external influence from Alexandrian and Constantinopolitan paradigms is effective in particular in the fifth to sixth century” (Krumeich 2003, p. 165). In the case of Oxyrhynchos, we know how intensive were connections between Egypt and Constantinople through the family of the Apiones, and perhaps others. What we see in Oxyrhynchos may indeed be the highlights of Egyptian architectural decoration as could also be admired in Alexandria at that time, reaching out into the empire and as far as Ravenna and Constantinople. Since the discovery of the church of Polyeuktos in Constantinople in the 1960s (for this church and its enigmatic form, see Bardill 2011), built in the beginning of the sixth century, these very forms of decoration are known already to have been in use in Constantinople before Justinian set up his splendid building program there.

On the other hand, forms of Egyptian church architecture itself seem to have been influential as well. This may be the result of the continuing high level of scholarship in mathematics and geometry in Alexandria far into Late Antiquity. Despite the dogmatic splits, the city remained a global player in at least some fields of science (for architecture in Alexandria and its global influence, see McKenzie 2007, pp. 322–350). Not even the monks who murdered Hypatia in 415 could alter this picture.

A similar leading role of Alexandria in the Byzantine world is suggested for the pictorial program in mosaics, and for book illustration (McKenzie 2007, pp. 351–375). In St. George’s Church in Thessaloniki, decorated in the fifth century, the style and pattern of the mosaics go back to Pompeian wall-paintings, with their lofty depictions of architecture – only there, one looked into the blue sky through the openings of the depicted arcades, while now one looks into the golden sphere of eternity. These patterns can also be identified as distinctive of the architecture of Late Antique Egypt. As has been pointed out by McKenzie (2007, p. 375), “the continuity was not only in the form of these scenes and their lack of figures, but also in their allusion to Paradise.” So, also in the arts, Alexandria seems to have remained a global trendsetter; from here, styles and patterns continued to spread out to the cities in the south of the country, to the Eastern Mediterranean, to Thessaloniki, to Jerusalem (Dome of the Rock), to the Great Mosque of Damascus, and to the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem.

All this conformity in style, form, and decorative arts existed side by side with the enormous dogmatic struggles. However, Constantinople faced yet other problems: there were enemies threatening from the south-east, the Persians.

5.6 Blemmyan Raids

In Egypt, on the other hand, no enemies challenged from the outside until the occupation by the Persians between 619 and 629, and the arrival of the Arabs in 639. The only break in the peace occurred in the southern part of the country, with the raids of desert people, in particular the tribe of the Blemmyes. The Blemmyes (Weber 2002), who lived in the desert between the Nile Valley and the Red Sea, had gained considerable power by the end of the third century, which led Diocletian to officially withdraw Roman forces from the Dodekaschoinos, the land to the south of the first Cataract, in the hope that the Blemmyes would stay there. Armed attacks by the tribe continued in the middle of the fifth century, ending

with a treatise between the Blemmyes and the Dux of the Thebaid declaring a peace of 100 years – which ultimately did not last very long. The continuous influence of the Blemmyes in the region of Aswan at that time is shown by the fact that they were allowed to continue worshipping Isis in the temple of Philae, despite the Theodosian interdiction of pagan worship of 391/2 – an exceptional situation that ended only in 535, when Justinian closed the temple for good. An even clearer picture of the Blemmyan power arises from the so-called “Gebelein Documents,” 12 texts written on gazelle leather at the beginning of the sixth century. Two of them are decrees by the Blemmyan kings Charachen and Pokatimne; it seems that these kings exercised at least administrative power in a certain region in Upper Egypt. Gebelein, where these texts were presumably found, lies to the south of today’s Luxor. Thus, the people living in the southern Nile Valley had to have been aware that from the desert in the east and south, dangerous attacks might at any moment be launched against their lives and possessions. The awareness of deadly threats from the desert may have added to the idea, widely held for centuries, but now transformed into Christian belief, that it was the devil who lived in and came from the desert – an idea that gained special momentum from the decision of those who retreated into the desert as hermits to withstand the dangers of the devil therein. Alexandria was free of such problems.

5.7 Paganism and Gnosticism

The well-known struggles between Christians in the fourth and fifth centuries make one forget that other religious movements were popular in Egypt at the same time, and had numerous followers. The religion that we call “pagan” was still alive in its practices and sacred places, if perhaps less so in Alexandria than in the countryside. Calculating the percentage of those who still went to the temples and used magical practices, which the Christians abhorred, does not give a clear picture of the situation. If we knew (which we do not) how many people were baptized in the Christian creed, we could claim to know the number of “Christians” in that sense. The stories around Shenoute and his attempts to convert and, indeed, punish pagans are only partly to be taken seriously; his personality was too charismatic to avoid the desire in his followers – and, in particular, his biographer – to involve him in a struggle against the powers of evil. How many of the old customs and institutions in Egypt continued for centuries to flourish can be gauged from habitual attempts to influence the flooding of the Nile and its ideal measure. Invocations to the river god still adopted the traditional shouts that had been in use since the Pharaonic Period: “Up Nile, Up Nile, Up Nile” (Treu 1974). At Alexandria, the measuring of the annual flood was transferred from the precinct of the Sarapeum into a church, indicating a vivid continuity in the practices connecting it with religion, not with natural science. In hymns, the river is invoked with the same vocabulary as Christ (Römer 2013).

The discovery in Upper Egypt – not far from where Pachomius had founded his monastery in 325 – of the so-called Nag Hammadi library of 13 codices written in Coptic highlights the great variety of approaches to securing salvation that were practiced there in Late Antiquity. Possible connections between the monastery and the codices are still being debated, and cannot be proved. However, it might be rash to discard the possibility

that such writings – not canonical, but “gnostic” – were part of a monastery’s library. Many of the texts are “Christian” in a certain sense: some refer to figures of the Old or New Testament, while others are of a liturgical or initiatory character (the texts are now best accessed in Meyer 2007). The definition of “Christianity” in Egypt at that time should not be based only on the dogmatic struggles being fought in Alexandria and Constantinople, but also on what we know about “Christianity” in the countryside and the monasteries.

The most successful “gnostic” religion was Manichaeism, which had its own church hierarchy. In a certain sense, Manichaeism was as Christian as it was “gnostic” (see most recently BeDuhn 2013; English translation of all Manichaean writings mentioned here from Gardner and Lieu 2004). Its founder was a man called Mani, or Manichaeos in Greek, born in Mesopotamia in 216, where he also died about 60 years later. Already in Mani’s lifetime, missionaries of his teachings arrived in Egypt describing the world as a very negative dwelling place on the one hand, and promising eternal blessings after death or in a future life on the other. With this negative view on the world, the Manichaeans were close in their beliefs to the early Christians, but their idea of how to leave this world behind was quite different. Essentially, the Manichaeans borrowed fundamental ideas from the Christians, as they did later in China from the Buddhists. Their ability to adjust to other religions in their environment added to their popularity in Egypt, where they became the strongest rival to the Christian Church, until they were banned by the state and driven out, as elsewhere. By the seventh century, Manichaeism had died out on the Nile.

Besides the ability to adjust, the other reason for the flamboyant success of Mani’s religion was certainly his straightforward explanation of the human condition and of the world. The fact that Mani had manifested this belief not only in numerous writings, authorized by himself, but also in a picture book, was attractive in a world where intellectuals were fighting about the nature of Christ using the terminology of Greek philosophy. Ordinary people understood the clear dichotomy between evil and good as explained by Mani much better. Even the church father Augustine had been a follower of Mani for eight years, because he found in him the easiest explanation of how evil came into the world despite it being God’s creation.

Evidence for the success of Mani’s religion in Egypt, particularly in the fourth and fifth centuries, is impressive; fragmentary books of the followers of that religion were found in the southern Fayum, at Medinet Madi, the modern oasis of Dakhla, in the environment of which the ancient village of Kellis has been excavated over the last 20 years. Texts found in several houses reveal the village as a stronghold of Manichaean belief in the fourth century. Also, a unique codex containing Mani’s biography was most likely found in Upper Egypt in the area of Asyut, from whence the road to the western oases departs from the Nile Valley. The Cologne Mani Codex, written in Greek, tells the story of Mani’s life, outlining the fundamental aspects of his teachings through the words of his disciples.

The languages employed in Manichaean writings and in texts from Manichaean daily life show how popular this religion was in different parts of society; indeed, the success of Manichaeism was by no means exclusively an Egyptian phenomenon. Writings of this religious movement exist also in Latin, Middle-Persian, Uigurian, Chinese, and many other languages.

Thus, there was a large diversity of “Christian” belief in Egypt in the early years. The unproblematic initial encounter (or so sources seem to suggest) of Christians and Muslims when the Arabs first came to Egypt in the middle of the seventh century may be explained by this well-experienced diversity.

5.8 Leaving the Byzantine World: The Arab Conquest

With the expansion of the Arab tribes beyond the borders of the Arabian peninsula, Egypt faced new problems from the outside. After Syria and Palestine had fallen to the Arabs, it was only a matter of time before Egypt followed (for early Islamic Egypt, see Sijpesteijn 2007, 2013; see also Kennedy 1998). In December 639, the general ‘Amr ibn al-‘As from the Umayyad clan started the invasion from Southern Palestine into the Eastern Delta; in 641, c. 4000 Arab troops invaded the Nile Valley (supplemented later by another 12 000); and in 642, Alexandria was conquered. How much of a resistance there really was is difficult to tell from the few – and biased – sources. Apart from a weak attempt to win Egypt back to the empire in 645/6, the Byzantines just withdrew, in a series of treaties initiated by local commanders. They had experienced the failure of supplies from Egypt already between 619 and 629, when Egypt was under Persian rule. After the death of the emperor Heraclius in 641, other problems seem to have been more pressing in Constantinople (for the conquest in general, see Butler and Fraser 1978). General ‘Amr ibn al-‘As is reported to have argued before the caliph Umar, “the conquest of Egypt will give great power to the Muslims and will be a great aid to them, for it is the wealthiest and the weakest in fighting and war power” (Ibn Abd al-Hakam, *Futūḥ* 56). Now, the Arabs had reached their goal. With ‘Amr ibn al-‘As, Egypt began to shift away from the Byzantine world – not immediately, but step by step.

It is difficult to assess how far the religion brought into Egypt played any role in the rapid conquest of the country. Did it have any impact at all, or were the Egyptians just glad to change government? There are signs that many at that time considered Islam as just another Christian religion. They still were accustomed to the fights between anti- and pro-Chalcedonians, and perhaps saw the arriving alternative as a relief.

Near the Roman fortress of Babylon at the southern end of the Delta, where access to the Nile Valley could best be controlled, Amr founded the city of Fustat and a mosque, parts of which still stand. From all over the country, bricks were ordered and shipped for the new city (CPR XXX). Fustat grew fast, offering space for the different Arab tribes in separated quarters. A new style of city developed; in 661–680 there were already 40 000 people registered here (Kennedy 1998, p. 65).

At first, Greek remained the main language of the administration, Coptic was used for private affairs, and Arabic was sometimes added, not as translation, but as a paraphrase of the Greek text. It seems that at this point, not enough staff was available for translation (the earliest surviving bilingual Greek and Arabic papyrus, dated to 643, is P.Vindob. inv. G 39726 [A.P. 8], edition by Grohmann 1952, pp. 113–115; it is a receipt for payment in kind, issued by the commander of the expeditionary troops to Upper Egypt, acknowledging the requisition of 65 sheep as provision of the military units and counted toward the

taxes for the year; cf. Demiri and Römer 2009, no. 4). Only in 706 did the governor ‘Abdel Allāh order that Arabic was to be used as the official language (Sijpesteijn 2007, p. 450).

In the administration of the country, many structures remained untouched, but Muslim authorities were in control at the highest level. A new poll tax was introduced, the *khraj* (*andrismos* in Greek). Caliphs had their own estates in the Fayum, as the Roman emperors had before (CPR VIII 82).

Initially, a Muslim presence was overwhelmingly visible only at Fustat, and much less so in the countryside. When Muslims became more involved in agriculture, began to settle in the Fayum, the Nile Valley, and the Delta, and intermarried with Copts, conversion to the new religion took off. Only in the mid-eighth century do Arabic names begin to appear in the papyrological documentation in great numbers. Muslims paid a lower land tax and no poll tax, which must have been an important incentive for conversion.

During the eighth century, Egypt receded more and more from the Byzantine world. The move of the capital away from Alexandria and the Mediterranean, and south into the Nile Valley, marked a move away from the former center to which it had belonged. That world had been an extension of the Classical Greek and Romans worlds in many respects, to which Egypt had added specific elements of its own pharaonic past. A thousand years of tradition came to an end: a period of time often forgotten by those who live in Egypt now, and by those who come and visit.

FURTHER READING

We refer the reader to the volume *Egypt in the Byzantine World, 300–700* (Bagnall 2007). Most of the chapters deal with Egypt during the Byzantine Period, but do not take into consideration relations between it and the empire as a whole; an exception is Grossmann’s (2007) paper on the early Christian architecture in Egypt and its relationship to the architecture of the Byzantine world. See also Griggs (1993) on early Egyptian Christianity and Watts (2006) on school in Late Antique Alexandria.

CHAPTER SIX

Life Portraits: Royals and People in a Globalizing World

Alexander Meeus

Next morning, the soft, even light of a tea-rose dawn spread over a magic spectacle, beautiful as a marvellous dream, flimsy as a vision, compelling as an enchantment. The ship had glided past the monumental, marble, nine-storeyed Pharos into the Great Harbour; and Alexandria lay before the eyes of the delighted travellers, Lucius, Thrasyllus, Catullus, shining pink through diaphanous, mother-o'-pearl gleams and a slowly-lifting silvery mist, like a city of magic and fairy-tale. A long, long row of white palaces, with irregular gables, loomed through the mist and the gleam.

Some such sensation as is here described by Louis Couperus in his novel *The Tour: A Story of Ancient Egypt* will have been experienced by many ancient travelers coming to Egypt via the sea in the Hellenistic, Roman, and Late Antique Periods. If they were Greeks or Macedonians, they would surely have been astonished by the colossal Greco-Egyptian statues of the Ptolemies that had been set up near the Pharos (Guimier-Sorbets 2007; Brophy 2015, p. 63). And those were just the first things that would astonish them on their visit.

Contacts between Egypt and Greece go back much longer than the Ptolemies, of course, as does Greek fascination with a land that “has the most wonders, and everywhere presents works beyond description” (Herodotus 2.35.1; cf. Mosley 1971; Vasunia 2001; Moyer 2011c, pp. 1–83). But after Alexander’s conquest those contacts hugely increased, and soon the Romans came on the scene too. One may thus speak of globalization or a globalizing world in a broad sense, and in that sense only. As Potts (2017, p. 918) aptly puts it: “The term globalization has a distinctly modern connotation ... Yet periods of geographically broad and culturally diverse integration – in other words, a species of proto-globalization – occurred during the premodern era in many parts of the world.” The reasons why people traveled to Egypt were manifold (Foertmeyer 1989): we shall, for

instance, meet royals and high-level politicians, as well as their wives, but also a father who went to visit his emigrated sons, and prisoners of war condemned to work in the gold mines.

The first Ptolemy arrived as an immigrant himself, at a time when the land probably showed very little sign of the new Greco-Macedonian presence. This would already have been different upon the arrival of the young Epirote prince Pyrrhus, by which time Ptolemy had moved his capital to Alexandria, and the city's development had surely progressed well (Łukaszewicz 2014; Howe 2014). After having been expelled from Epirus when the rival king Neoptolemus had been installed on the throne, Pyrrhus joined the Antigonid court, and he remained with Demetrius Poliorcetes even after the latter lost almost all his territory in the crushing defeat at Ipsus in 301 BC. When Ptolemy made peace with Demetrius and married off his daughter Ptolemais to him c. 299, he still required hostages from Demetrius, and Pyrrhus was among those selected (Plutarch, *Pyrrhus* 4.3). Even as a hostage, however, he participated in regular court life, taking part even in hunts, and achieved a position of high esteem:

Here, both in hunting and in bodily exercises, he gave Ptolemy proof of his prowess and endurance, and seeing that among the wives of Ptolemy it was Berenice who had the greatest influence and was foremost in virtue and understanding, he paid especial court to her. He was adept at turning to his own advantage the favor of his superiors, just as he was inclined to look down upon his inferiors, and since he was orderly and restrained in his ways of living, he was selected from among many young princes as a husband for Antigone, one of the daughters of Berenice, whom she had by Philip before her marriage with Ptolemy. After this marriage he was held in still greater esteem, and since Antigone was an excellent wife to him, he brought it to pass that he was sent into Epeirus with money and an army to regain his kingdom. (Plutarch, *Pyrrhus* 4.4–5.1, translation Perrin, Loeb Classical Library)

Pyrrhus' return to his homeland with Ptolemaic money and troops seems to have been particularly noticed in Alexandria (cf. Suda s.v. *Φάρος*, *Φ*114 Adler, with Fraser 1972, 1, p. 20); it is not unlikely that his departure was highlighted with some pomp. At any rate, his stay in Egypt seems to have created permanent good ties with the Ptolemaic court, which came in handy when he crossed over to Italy (Hammond 1988).

Someone else who will have left Alexandria accompanied by great pomp – although we have no record of it – was a young princess named Arsinoe, later to be known as Arsinoe II Philadelphus. Her young adulthood is another illustration of how small and interconnected the Hellenistic world often was, especially at the top, and of the difficulties facing a Hellenistic princess. In the year 300 BC, she married King Lysimachus, who was probably at least 40 years older than her, to consolidate another of her father's alliances (Pausanias 1.10.3). At Lysimachus' court, she soon became involved in the typical struggle for influence found at polygamous courts (Ogden 1999), and she may have been involved in the death of Lysimachus' son with Nicaea, Agathocles (Carney 2013, pp. 44–45). The absence of an adult male heir led to great uncertainty when Lysimachus fell in a battle against Seleucus, who was in turn killed by Arsinoe's half-brother Ptolemy Ceraunus in 281. Ceraunus was himself proclaimed king, posing as the avenger of Lysimachus. He proposed to Arsinoe, and when he swore an oath and promised to adopt her children, she abandoned some of her reluctance: her children would perhaps be less of

a threat to Ceraunus when he became their step-father, and he in turn would be less of a threat to them. Yet, Arsinoe's oldest son, likewise named Ptolemy, did not trust Ceraunus and fled – which would soon prove the right choice, as the newly wedded Ceraunus killed his younger brothers. Arsinoe herself got away, but had obviously been in a precarious position (Carney 2013, pp. 49–63). After such tumultuous experiences at the courts of Lysimachus and Ceraunus, one can see how she might have thought that a return to Alexandria and a marriage to her full brother Ptolemy II would be a good – or, at least, peaceful and stable – idea (Carney 2013, pp. 76–77; see Chapter 3 for Arsinoe as Ptolemaic queen).

For all the freedom and privileges a royal hostage like Pyrrhus enjoyed at the Ptolemaic court, the situation of the many prisoners of war who were brought to Egypt would have been very different. The lucky ones ended up in the Ptolemaic army (Fischer-Bovet 2014, p. 201), while the unlucky were brought to the mines for slave labor in the worst of circumstances, as described by the second-century historian Agatharchides of Cnidus, who was the source of Diodorus for this text:

For the kings of Egypt gather together and condemn to the mining of the gold such as have been found guilty of some crime and captives of war ... And those who have been condemned in this way – and they are a great multitude and are all bound in chains – work at their task unceasingly both by day and throughout the entire night, enjoying no respite and being carefully cut off from any means of escape; since guards of foreign soldiers who speak a language different from theirs stand watch over them, so that not a man, either by conversation or by some contact of a friendly nature, is able to corrupt one of his keepers ... And since no opportunity is afforded any of them to care for his body and they have no garment to cover their shame, no man can look upon the unfortunate wretches without feeling pity for them because of the exceeding hardships they suffer. For no leniency or respite of any kind is given to any man who is sick, or maimed, or aged, or in the case of a woman for her weakness, but all without exception are compelled by blows to persevere in their labors, until through ill-treatment they die in the midst of their tortures. Consequently the poor unfortunates believe, because their punishment is so excessively severe, that the future will always be more terrible than the present and therefore look forward to death as more to be desired than life. (Diodorus Siculus 3.12–13, translation Oldfather, Loeb Classical Library)

Many people came to Egypt voluntarily, in search of a better life. As a result of this large influx of immigrants, another reason for travel to Egypt was to visit family, although we cannot say how common such long-distance family visits were. Some indications are found in the archive of Zenon, the well-known manager of the Fayum estate of the minister of finances (*dioiketes*) Apollonios, who had two brothers who likewise lived in Egypt (see Chapters 17 and 18); in 253 BC, their father, Agreophon, who still lived in his hometown Caunus in Caria, visited his sons for some months. On January 2, 252, Zenon received a letter from a certain Demetrios, informing him that his father had reached home safely (P.Lond. VII 1979). He had been made to leave behind mattresses and pillows he had bought in Egypt because of difficulties with customs clearance in Alexandria, but they would be shipped to Caunus afterward, when the sailing conditions would be better. How long Agreophon stayed in Egypt to visit his children and what else he did apart from buying those goods we do not know; it has been suggested that he had been enabled

finally to visit his sons again by the peaceful conditions in the Eastern Mediterranean after the conclusion of the Second Syrian War (Hauben 1985, pp. 107–108). Another such family visit, however, occurred in the middle of the war, when Doris “the sister,” a relative of Zenon or of the *dioiketes* Apollonios, traveled from Caria to Egypt in the winter of 258/7 – perhaps she made use of the winter break in the warfare (Clarysse 2009b, p. 36). At any rate, the mere planning of such trips must already have caused specific difficulties, and the preparation must have started well in advance of people’s arrival in Egypt: in the case of Caria, both the preparatory letters and the people traveling needed easily two months or more for their voyage (Hauben 1985, pp. 105–106; Clarysse 2009b, p. 35). The interconnectedness of the Eastern Mediterranean at this time is perhaps even better illustrated by such letters as the one in which his cousin Neon, who lived in Calynda in Caria, appealed to Zenon to help him out when Ptolemaic soldiers had been quartered at his home and he needed to supply food for a cavalry horse. The burden and annoyance of having soldiers quartered in one’s house or city is attested in many sources (Chaniotis 2005, pp. 88–93; Viviers 2011). Neon did not write directly to Zenon, but asked a certain Damonikos the following:

Would you please speak to Zenon about the billeting and the hay and the green fodder for the sixty-days’ obligation, asking that an order be given in my name; for at present we have people quartered on us and have also to provide hay and green fodder for the cavalryman, as they are paying no attention to the first letter. But let him write also to the same effect to the *boule* and *demos*. I am trying to come and join you myself at all costs. Until I come, then, speak to him yourself, taking along Ariston, Epharmostos, and Apollonios. I have written to Apollonios as well as Epharmostos, asking them to speak to Zenon on your behalf also. Farewell. (P.Cairo Zen. III 59341b, translation Bagnall and Derow 2004, no. 68)

Zenon then seems to have sent a letter to the *dioiketes* Apollonios (not the Apollonios mentioned in the previous quotation), asking him to write to the Ptolemaic *oikonomos* and to the city institutions of Calynda:

On behalf of Therarchos who married my father’s sister, who lives in Calynda, you wrote that he was not to have soldiers quartered on him and that he was to be exempted from providing hay and green fodder. But now that Therarchos is dead his family has to lodge soldiers and is compelled to provide hay and green fodder. Will you kindly therefore write to Diodotos the *oikonomos* and to the *boule* and *demos* to see that Neon enjoys the same privileges as his father. (P.Cairo Zen. III 59341c, translation Edgar 1920, pp. 36–37)

Important foreign guests were treated with great deference: although there may have been some hasty emergency preparations (P. Lond. VII 1973; cf. Archibald 2004, p. 1), the visits were usually carefully prepared and the guests were shown important sights, such as the monumental labyrinth of Pharaoh Amenemhat III (Middle Kingdom) in the Fayum (Lloyd 1970), or the rituals of animal cults (cf. later on Strabo), as is revealed in a letter of 112 BC:

Hermias to Horos, greeting. A copy of the letter to Asklepiades is appended. Take care that things take place accordingly. Farewell. Year 5, Xandikos 17, Mecheir 17.

To Asklepiades. Lucius Memmius, a Roman senator, who occupies a position of great dignity and honor, is making the voyage from the city [Alexandria] to the Arsinoite nome to see the sights. Let him be received with special magnificence, and take care that at the proper spots the guest chambers be prepared and the landing-places to them be got ready with great care, and that the gifts of hospitality mentioned below be presented to him at the landing-place, and that the furniture of the chamber, the customary bites of food for Petesouchos and the crocodiles, the necessities for the view of the labyrinth, and the victims to be offered and the supply for the sacrifices be properly managed; in general take the utmost pains in everything that the visitor may be satisfied, and display the utmost zeal. (P.Tebt. I 33, translation Bagnall and Derow 2004, no. 69)

For the moralizing ancient historians, such embassies offered ideal occasions for contrasting the decadence of Hellenistic kings like Ptolemy VIII with the moderation of leading Romans like Scipio Aemilianus – both surely exaggerated. But we need not doubt that the ambassadors tended to show great interest in strategic matters besides the sights that were on the official program, as we are told on this occasion (c. 140 BC):

Scipio (Aemilianus) Africanus (minor) and his fellow ambassadors came to Alexandria to survey the entire kingdom. Ptolemy welcomed the men with a great reception and much pomp, held costly banquets for them, and conducting them about showed them his palace and other royal treasures. Now the Roman envoys were men of superior virtue, and since their normal diet was limited to a few dishes, and only such as were conducive to health, they were scornful of his extravagance as detrimental to both body and mind. The spectacle of all that the king considered marvelous they regarded as a side show of no real account, but busied themselves in detail with what was truly worth seeing: the situation and strength of the city, the unique features of the Pharos, then, proceeding up the river to Memphis, the quality of the land and the blessings brought to it by the Nile, the great number of Egyptian cities and the untold myriads of their inhabitants, the strong defensive position of Egypt, and the general excellence of the country, in that it is well suited to provide for the security and greatness of an empire. (Diodorus Siculus 33.28b.1–2, translation Walton, Loeb Classical Library)

Diodorus reports on another Roman embassy that was treated exquisitely, before things turned out very bad. In his discussion of Egyptian animal cults (McDonald 2014), he asserts that in Egypt even the accidental killing of a cat is punished by death, and he illustrates his claim with the following story, set at the time when Ptolemy XII was desperately trying to secure Roman support in 60 or 59 BC (on the relations between the Ptolemies and Rome at this time, see Siani-Davies 1997, esp. pp. 316–317; Westall 2009, 2010):

So deeply implanted also in the hearts of the common people is their superstitious regard for these animals and so unalterable are the emotions cherished by every man regarding the honor due to them that once, at the time when Ptolemy their king had not yet been given by the Romans the appellation of “friend” and the people were exercising all zeal in courting the favor of the embassy from Italy which was then visiting Egypt and, in their fear, were intent upon giving no cause for complaint or war, when one of the Romans killed a cat and the multitude rushed in a crowd to his house, neither the officials sent by the king to beg the man off nor the fear of Rome which all the people felt were enough to save the man from punishment, even though his act had been an accident. And this incident we relate, not from hearsay, but we saw it with our own eyes on the occasion of the visit we made to Egypt. (Diodorus Siculus 1.83.8–9, translations Oldfather, Loeb Classical Library)

Since this is one of very few such personal experiences that Diodorus has included in his work, it is clear that it must have made a great impression on him. Although it has been observed that Diodorus' attitude toward Egypt was more positive than that of many of his contemporaries (Isaac 2004, p. 359; Muntz 2017, pp. 228–231), the event may have made such an impression because the animal worship appeared so bizarre to him (cf. Smelik and Hemelrijk 1984):

As for the various services which these animals require, the Egyptians not only do not try to avoid them or feel ashamed to be seen by the crowds as they perform them, but on the contrary, in the belief that they are engaged in the most serious rites of divine worship, they assume airs of importance, and wearing special insignia make the rounds of the cities and the countryside. (Diodorus Siculus 1.83.4, translation Oldfather, Loeb Classical Library)

Was this the embassy of which Cicero would have been a member, had he accepted the invitation to join (Cicero, *Epistulae ad Atticum* 2.5.1)? At any rate, we would love to know how the Senate reacted to the execution of a Roman ambassador over the killing of a cat, and one wonders whether Cicero was thinking – among other things – of this episode when he asked some 15 years later:

Who does not know of the custom of the Egyptians? Their minds are infected with degraded superstitions and they would sooner submit to any torment than injure an ibis or asp or cat or dog or crocodile, and even if they have unwittingly done anything of the kind there is no penalty from which they would recoil. (Cicero, *Tusculanae disputationes* 5.78, translation King, Loeb Classical Library)

Another writer who traveled to Egypt was Strabo, who visited the land in the company of the prefect, Aelius Gallus, just a few years after the Romans had taken over control, as he himself tells us (c. 25 BC):

When Gallus was prefect of Egypt, I accompanied him and ascended the Nile as far as Syene and the frontiers of Ethiopia, and I learned that as many as one hundred and twenty vessels were sailing from Myos Hormos to India, whereas formerly, under the Ptolemies, only a very few ventured to undertake the voyage and to carry on traffic in Indian merchandise. (Strabo 2.5.12, translation Jones, Loeb Classical Library)

The precise purpose of his travels is unclear (Engels 2014, p. 167), but Strabo definitely used his knowledge of the land in his long description of Egypt in book 17 (Yoyotte et al. 1998), and he offers us much interesting information on what Greek and Roman travelers saw in the country at the time. At Heliopolis, he was shown where Plato and Eudoxus, two of his alleged Classical predecessors as scholars in Egypt, had stayed (17.1.29): the priests knew what their visitors liked to hear. At Arsinoe, the capital of the Fayum oasis, the feeding of the sacred Suchos crocodile was also part of the show, as for our Roman senator earlier:

The people in this nome hold in very great honor the crocodile, and there is a sacred one there which is kept and fed by itself in a lake, and is tame to the priests. It is called Suchus;

and it is fed on grain and pieces of meat and on wine, which are always being fed to it by the foreigners who go to see it. At any rate, our host, one of the officials, who was introducing us into the mysteries there, went with us to the lake, carrying from the dinner a kind of cooky and some roasted meat and a pitcher of wine mixed with honey. We found the animal lying on the edge of the lake; and when the priests went up to it, some of them opened its mouth and another put in the cake, and again the meat, and then poured down the honey mixture. The animal then leaped into the lake and rushed across to the far side; but when another foreigner arrived, likewise carrying an offering of first-fruits, the priests took it, went around the lake in a run, took hold of the animal, and in the same manner fed it what had been brought. (Strabo 17.1.38, translation Jones, Loeb Classical Library)

For the highest members of the Roman elite, visiting Egypt would have become more difficult in the imperial age, as Augustus

among the other secrets of absolutism, by prohibiting all senators or Roman knights of the higher rank from entering the country without permission, kept Egypt isolated; in order that Italy might not be subjected to starvation by anyone who contrived, with however slight a garrison against armies however formidable, to occupy the province and the key-positions by land and sea. (Tacitus, *Annales* 2.59, translation Moore, Loeb Classical Library)

Tiberius seems to have thought Germanicus reckless in visiting the land without Augustus' consent (Tacitus, *Annales* 2.59), although the latter seemed unaware of the prohibition and simply wished to view the antiquities. If later emperors upheld this measure, then even senators who engaged in touristic activities like visiting the colossus of Memnon must have been in Egypt on some official business (Eck 1975, pp. 331–332). The colossus was among the main attractions in Egypt, situated on the West Bank of the Nile opposite the city of Thebes. They were in fact two colossal statues, 18 m in height, which guarded the memorial temple of pharaoh Amenhotep III (New Kingdom), one of the largest temples of ancient Egypt. Greeks and Romans identified the northern statue as the Trojan (or Ethiopian) hero Memnon, the son of the goddess Eos (Dawn): only the bottom half of it was still standing, and as a result of the damage, when the sun heated the statue in the morning, it often made a noise that was interpreted as Memnon singing to his mother. It was mainly this noise that made the statue such a popular sight, and many travelers left graffiti on its legs to commemorate hearing Memnon: often, these were very formal inscriptions, or even complete poems (Strabo 17.1.46; Plinius, *Naturalis Historia* 36.11[58]; Tacitus, *Annales* 2.61; Pausanias 1.42.3; Bowersock 1984; Karakhanyan et al. 2010). In the early years of the third century AD, M. Herennius Faustus was the last to record his presence there (Bernand and Bernand 1960, no. 60), but there were many before him. One hundred and seven inscriptions have been read, and some of them offer rare knowledge of women traveling to Egypt (Frass 2006, pp. 486–494). The most intriguing story is surely that of Hadrian's wife Sabina during an imperial visit recorded on Memnon's left leg in four epigrams by the female poet Julia Balbilla in November of AD 130 (Bernand and Bernand 1960, nos. 28–31; Rosenmeyer 2008, pp. 341–343; Pfeiffer 2015, no. 66). Sabina added her personal testimony in a

brief prose inscription accompanying Balbilla's poetry, four lines of which are legible (Bernand and Bernand 1960, no. 32):

Sabina Augusta,
wife of the emperor Caesar
Hadrian, within one hour
twice heard Memnon
...

The first two poems of Balbilla treat the presence of Hadrian (no. 28) and Sabina (no. 29) separately in grand style. From the third poem (no. 30), however, we learn that it had actually required some patience for Sabina to hear Memnon twice, because the day before, at dawn, she had come to the statue in vain:

When on the first day we didn't hear Memnon:
Yesterday Memnon received [Hadrian's] wife in silence,
so that the beautiful Sabina might come back here again.
For the lovely form of our queen pleases you.
When she arrives, send forth a divine shout,
so the king won't be angry with you. As it is now,
you've fearlessly detained for too long his noble wedded wife.
And Memnon, trembling at the power of great Hadrian,
suddenly spoke, and she rejoiced to hear it.
(Translation Rosenmeyer 2008, p. 343)

They were not the only ones who had needed to come twice to hear Memnon sing: the same is attested, for instance, for a nome *strategos* a few years earlier (SB V 8339). In a fourth epigram (no. 31), Balbilla, who had already written some verses about herself in the poem on Sabina (no. 29, pp. 13–18), eternalized solely her own presence:

I, Balbilla, heard, from the speaking stone,
The divine voice of Memnon or Phamenoth.
I came here with our lovely queen Sabina,
When the sun held its course during the first hour.
In the fifteenth year of the emperor Hadrian's rule,
Hathyr was on its twenty-fourth day.
On the twenty-fifth day of the month of Hathyr.
(Translation Rosenmeyer 2008, p. 343)

That they left five inscriptions may be an expression of their status, but some of the verses – and especially Sabina's prose addition – do suggest that they actually were impressed by the experience. Why only one of the five texts the company had inscribed concerns Hadrian himself, whereas the others focus on Sabina and Balbilla, is unclear; it has been suggested that the latter two made more visits to the statues than the emperor, who had gone to see the statue alone on the day before his entourage could witness the miracle (Rosenmeyer 2008, p. 344). Another factor may be that Hadrian did not rejoice as much as his entourage, since it was Memnon who had to feel honored by the imperial visit, rather than the other way around (Rosenmeyer 2008, pp. 337, 346).

Speculation about an intimate, even sexual relationship between Sabina and Balbilla is just that, as Rosenmeyer (2008, pp. 339–340, 352, and 354–355) has rightly argued: we have no indications that their association was anything other than that of poet and patron (Hemelrijk 1999, pp. 118–119 and 170; Rosenmeyer 2008, p. 355). “But I don’t think that this statue of you could ever perish, and I sense in my heart a soul hereafter immortal,” writes Balbilla in one of the epigrams (no. 29.11–12). At some point, probably in the third century, the statue was restored (Bowersock 1984 argues that Zenobia was responsible). It stopped singing, but it does indeed still stand today.

Women traveled to Egypt in greater numbers than this, of course, but often we know very little about them – as in the case of Seneca’s aunt, of whom we merely hear that she was held in high esteem for never appearing in public in the 16 years in which her husband was prefect of Egypt (Seneca, *Ad Helviam* 19.6). Such seclusion was not practiced by all women in her position. Funisulana Vettulla, wife of C. Tettius Africanus, prefect of Egypt under Domitian, visited the colossus of Memnon no less than three times (Frass 2006, pp. 492–493); recently, it has even been speculated that she was involved in bringing back Egyptian antiquities to Italy (Capriotti Vitozzi 2009, p. 61).

Another traveling woman, the otherwise unknown Aurelia Maeciana, appears in the sources only at the point when she wishes to leave Egypt and requests a passport in AD 246 – a rare attestation of a woman apparently traveling overseas on her own (Foubert 2016, p. 294):

To Valerius Firmus, praefect of Egypt, from Aurelia Maeciana of Side. I wish, my lord, to sail out by way of Pharos; I beg you to write to the procurator of Pharos to allow me to leave according to the usual practice. Pachon 1. Farewell. (P.Oxy. X 1271, translation Edgar and Hunt, *Sel.Pap.* II 304)

Aurelia was granted her permit, but we do not know what happened after that. With ancient communications, the situation of waiting for news of a safe journey would have been difficult and protracted, as we see in this fourth-century AD letter of a man worried about a woman he addresses as “sister” – although he also seizes the opportunity to give her some instructions about her son, perhaps an equally great cause of worry:

To the lady my sister Antiochia from Heraclides, greeting. I am sending Melas with a letter, because the wind was contrary to us since you sailed, in order that you might let us know of your journey and security, and may the divine providence grant that you may be restored in security to your home; and do you by all means send word to us whether you have arrived, in order that we may be more reassured after hearing about you. Let your son give heed to his work; I have sent to tell him to take proper care of the work, having regard to the difference of the year. I pray for your lasting health, my lady sister. (P.Oxy. XIV 1682.3–18, translation Grenfell and Hunt)

Whether Antiochia had reached her destination we shall probably never know, but this survey of some of the reasons for which people traveled briefly or permanently to Egypt at least gives us some indication of the interconnectedness of the Hellenistic, Roman and Byzantine (Box 6.1) worlds, at all levels of society (although when common people were involved, the circumstances will often have been unpleasant, e.g. in the case of slaves and prisoners of war). Unsurprisingly, perhaps, even in times of such interconnectedness, cultural differences between Egyptians and others remained great, and the capacity for understanding sometimes small.

Box 6.1 “Wandering” Orators and Poets in Late Antique Egypt.*by Katelijn Vandorpe*

In Late Antique Egypt, a Classical Greek education resulting in oratorical skills, a grammarian’s profession, or a career as a poet could advance social mobility. Here, we display the careers of a “wandering orator” and two “wandering poets” from Panopolis (Achmim), whose rhetorical or poetic qualities, rather than law expertise, led to a job in the provincial or imperial administration (Cameron 1965, 2016; Geens 2007a).

Harpokration, brother of Ammon *Scholasticus* (see also Chapter 30)

Egypt

early fourth century AD

local member of the elite in Panopolis

sophist in Panopolis, paid by public funds

Constantinople

court panegyrist (presenting panegyrics to the emperors)

Travels in Greece and Rome

appointed *curator* and *procurator* (imperial envoy who reorganized cities having financial problems)**Pamprepius** (see also Chapter 5)

Egypt

born in Panopolis AD 440

grammarian of poor background

Athens

thirty-three years old

professional poet

grammarian teacher for several years, studying philosophy

patronage of the Christian magnate Theagenes, but after a conflict with him, leaves Athens

Constantinople

thirty-five years old

magician and professional poet

public teacher through the agency of Illus, *magister militum* under Emperor Zenocareer in the Palatine service as *quaestor sacri palatii* (*quaestor* of the Sacred Palace)*consul honorarius* and *patricius*

Nicaea

revolts against Emperor Zeno, together with Illus

supported by the pagans of Alexandria

killed by Illus after alleged betrayal

Cyrus (see also Chapter 5)

Egypt

poet from the Panopolite nome, writing eulogies, epigrams, and so on

patronage of the empress Eudocia

Constantinople

prefect of Constantinople

praetorian prefect of the East, promoting Greek as the administrative language instead of Latin

ordinary consul in AD 441

admitted to the patriciate in AD 461

in disgrace with Emperor Theodosius II, who confiscates his property

Phrygia

exiled and consecrated by the emperor as bishop in Cotyaeum, in the hope that he will be killed there

Constantinople

return to the capital after Theodosius II's death

FURTHER READING

The most extensive treatment of tourism in Greco-Roman Egypt is Foertmeyer (1989), while Foubert (2016) focuses on women. Casson (1974) on ancient travel in general remains valuable, too. For imperial visits, see Chapter 4. For a reconstruction of the duration and financial costs of travel in the Roman world, see the interactive website of ORBIS: The Stanford Geospatial Network Model of the Roman World (orbis.stanford.edu).

PART III

**GOVERNING A COUNTRY
WITH A PAST:
BETWEEN TRADITION
AND INNOVATION**

CHAPTER SEVEN

The Ptolemaic Governmental Branches and the Role of Temples and Elite Groups

Joseph G. Manning

The terms “branches” and “governmental” used in the title of this chapter might be too strong to describe how the Ptolemies governed their territory, since they imply a kind of highly developed formal structure, or at least a stable administration that distinguished between public and private spheres – a distinction that never really existed (Husson and Valbelle 1992; Manning 2010, p. 150; cf. Manning 1995). And while the term generally used for the hierarchic official control of the institutions of governance, “bureaucracy,” is also perhaps anachronistic, I will not replace it here.

7.1 Performance of Ptolemaic Governance

How, then, should we think about the institutions of Ptolemaic governance? Often, earlier studies have assumed that the basic structure was simply inherited from ancient Egypt. But that is too simple. Throughout the first millennium BC, Egypt was governed by many outside political forces, each of which brought new things. To be sure, an important part of establishing a political order in all phases of Egypt’s history was the creation of an administrative hierarchy of state officials that linked villages and towns to regional centers and ultimately to the political center(s). Whatever the connection between the New Kingdom bureaucracy and later historical development elsewhere, one case where the New Kingdom surely served as a model was in the Ptolemaic system that appeared some one millennium later in Egypt. In both historical cases, Egypt formed the core of an empire, warfare was endemic, and civil and military bureaucracies reached their greatest extent. At the same time, we cannot simply skip over the 700 years between the

New Kingdom and the Ptolemaic Period. Saite and Persian administration of Egypt also influenced Ptolemaic structure and practice.

Samuel (1989) argues that there was a certain fluidity in the system, and that the use of titles was a real reflection of the actual exigencies of Ptolemaic rule: attention was paid to titles as rank or status indicators, rather than as designators of territorial or portfolio responsibility. This was not, despite appearances to the contrary, a “rigid” system, as Jones (1971, p. 297) described it – perhaps due to a probable lack of Greek-speaking officials to fill what remained theoretical “vacancies” throughout the country (Samuel 1989 summarizing much of his earlier work). I have adopted Crone’s (2003, p. 57) term “capstone government” to describe the basic dynamic of the Ptolemaic bureaucratic system (if it is fair to call it that), which was “built to control” by “policing rather than organizing” (Manning 2010, p. 75). There was thus no radical transformation of the patterns of governance, and very little need to fundamentally change what was historically a diverse system (Bagnall 1976, p. 10). If the number of state officials at all levels was greater than before, this was a function of a large population and the employment function of the state. To be sure, the Ptolemaic system was driven by Greek initiative and state needs, and although it was a bilingual system, Greek became the main language of the bureaucracy.

It is important to stress, as many scholars have, that while it must have taken a significant amount of time for the Ptolemaic “system” to become functional – to make the link between the Greek language of the court and the Egyptian language of local areas, or between the political center at Alexandria and agricultural production throughout Egypt – we know that Cleomenes was able to mobilize Egyptian agricultural resources without any Ptolemaic “bureaucracy” in place (Arrian, *Anabasis* 3.5). What mattered for Cleomenes’ “monopoly” power, and for the later performance of the Ptolemaic state, were the social networks and the partnerships created by them, through which commodities flowed (Gabrielsen 2011). Sources remain scant for the reign of Ptolemy I, a time when the initial system of governance was established, but we may presume that there were no drastic changes. Ptolemy II’s reign looms large over the whole Ptolemaic system. The degree to which this king was responsible for the design of the entire system can be debated. Nevertheless, it is during this period that documentation for the system is at its clearest, and there are many reasons to think that the Ptolemaic system as we know it took time to set up. It seems clear that the bureaucratic system evolved under the pressures of war over the course of the third and early second centuries BC. After the major revolt of 206–186 BC, tighter administrative control – with the establishment of new garrisons – was enacted in Upper Egypt (Vandorpe 1995, 2011).

What difference, then, did the fully developed Ptolemaic system make? It is difficult to assess actual performance over the long run, although the balance of our evidence would suggest that it was a reasonably successful system for its day. What is clearer – and more important than simply describing the structure of Ptolemaic governance – is the role of Greek and Egyptian elite groups, and of Greek and Egyptian institutions, in the co-evolution of Ptolemaic society. Ancient bureaucratic systems are often viewed as corrupt, slow, abusive, and purely rent-seeking, embedded in patrimonial social structures, not always loyal to the state, and isolated from society by despotic kings who tolerated a bureaucratic elite but cared little for anyone else (on the basic problem of rent-seeking in a modern context, see Olson 1984). This was essentially Tarn and Griffith’s (1952, pp. 177–209)

view, expressed in their influential treatment of the Ptolemaic bureaucracy. What started out in the third century BC as an efficient system “administered by men superior to the common failings of humanity” devolved “under the weaker kings of the second century” (Tarn and Griffith 1952, p. 204) to utter administrative chaos. To be sure, there were many problems in the Ptolemaic bureaucracy, probably from the very beginning – although this is not as well documented as the problems of the second century BC highlighted in the royal decrees of 118 BC (P.Tebt. I 5), for example.

What was a particular person’s function, rather than his or her ethnicity, was an important distinction. A separation of Greek and Egyptian “functions” in the system remained (Clarysse 1985; Falivene 1991, p. 204, 217), where the “Greek” functions belonged to the royal economy, and the “Egyptian” functions to Egyptian temple institutions. The complexities of the interactions of Greeks and Egyptians have been widely explored in the literature (Bingen 1970, 1978a; see also Chapter 19). The names of many Greek offices were transliterated, rather than translated, into Demotic – a sign of their “foreign” nature from the point of view of Egyptian practice. For example, the *eisagogeus* (Demotic *3ysws*), who seems to have represented the state at Egyptian courts, and the *epistates* (Demotic *3pystytys*) are two Ptolemaic officials found in Demotic documents (Clarysse 1987; Falivene 1991, pp. 215–216). Nevertheless, Egyptians, provided they knew Greek to some extent (Rupprecht 2011), could function at most levels of the system, in part due to the small number of Greeks in Egypt, estimated between at 5 and 10% of the population (Fischer-Bovet 2011, 2014, p. 170 has made a good case for the 5% figure; see also Chapter 19). The scribal function, and Egyptian scribal families, remained vital to the Ptolemaic system (Johnson 1987). Thus, the system can rightly be described as bilingual, since many of the scribes who functioned in the state system were Egyptians who learned Greek (to varying degrees).

The Ptolemaic governance of Egypt was overwhelmingly concerned with the fiscal system and the collection of tax revenue. This primarily involved agriculture and animal husbandry – a fact well attested in the surviving administrative papyri dedicated to these concerns. The structure of this system is at its most elaborate and articulated in one of the best known documents of the period, the so-called Revenue Laws (P.Rev., see Grenfell and Mahaffy 1896; Préaux 1939; Bingen 1952, 1978b). It is probably the case that this text cannot be used, as has occasionally been done, as a guide to the historical structure or the development of statewide governance. It is certainly true that the Revenue Laws – not a single text, but in fact a collection of several – do not provide evidence for a planned economy, as was once thought. Of related concern were the administration of law, the temples, and the external possessions of the Ptolemies. Administrative structures were dictated by the basic political topography, which was shaped in turn by historical practice and contemporary need: the two new Greek urban areas of Alexandria and Ptolemais in the south, ancient temple economy systems (some of them, as the Edfu Donation text (see Meeks 1972; Manning 2003a) informs us, with extensive land holdings and personnel), and above everything else, in the third century BC especially, the requirements of mobilizing military power. We know very little about building in the new urban centers, or about the supply of food and water to them, but they must have entailed considerable expense and organizational capacity. The military, to be sure, commanded a very large portion of the state expenditure, particularly during the years of the Syrian Wars (Grainger 2010; on Ptolemaic military budgets, see Fischer-Bovet 2014, pp. 66–83).

There is now a large literature on Ptolemaic institutions of governance, and their much-vaunted bureaucratic system. A full historical analysis of the Ptolemaic administrative system and its evolution over time remains to be written: “Beyond the fragmentation of evidence that precludes certainty or systematic analysis across the three centuries for the whole of Egypt, we would do well to remember that in any kind of analysis we are dealing with a premodern state and therefore measures of ‘efficiency,’ performance, logical structure, and so on should be relative” (Thomas 1975, p. 9; on bureaucratic control as a generally relatively more “efficient” system than other kinds of agency, see Kiser and Schneider 1994).

Many succinct overviews have been given of the structure of Ptolemaic governance (*inter alia* Bagnall and Derow 2004; Legras 2004; for a view from the perspective of the *longue durée*, see Husson and Valbelle 1992 and the detailed studies in Moreno García 2013). The basic structure was ancient, but there were important additions and changes in the Ptolemaic system. A tension existed between the king’s ability to appoint nome officials and the patrimonial power inherent in Egyptian social structure that resulted in the hereditary tendency of local families to control official functions. That was an ancient problem (Lloyd 1992). The Ptolemies attempted to control it by the sale of certain offices, with limited success; the Ptolemaic system, as earlier in Egypt, remained dominated by the patrimonial power of local families. The so-called “nome *strategoi*,” to contrast the civil office with the former military one, seem to have been a direct appointment of the king (Bagnall and Derow 2004, p. 286). Royal control may also have been asserted – although we do not know too much about this beyond its mention in a handful of texts – by the demand of physical presence at the royal court. Priests appear to have been required to visit the capital annually (remitted in the Memphis Decree), and we learn from the Menches archive, dated to the late second century BC, that the royal scribe of the nome and the village scribes were also required, apparently, to have their books inspected there by the *dioiketes* or “minister of finances” (Verhoogt 1998, pp. 83–88).

7.2 The Ideology of Centralization

The king was at the center of governance, but it is all too easy to overestimate royal power. Samuel (1993, pp. 188–189) is right to stress that the key to the mobilization of resources was the individuals in bureaucratic and temple posts. The famous priestly decrees, such as the Memphis Decree preserved on the Rosetta Stone (196 BC, Austin 2006, no. 283, OGIS 90), illustrate very well, at a moment of crisis, that the king (the very young Ptolemy V), ritually embedded in the public ceremonies of kingship, with the expectations of royal piety toward the gods, and expressing the traditional royal function in establishing order, was only one actor in a larger political drama. The king as “source” of political power, of legal order, of wise counsel, and as heroic military commander (as seen in the Raphia Decree, 217 BC, Austin 2006, no. 276) harkens back to ancient Egyptian literary forms – in other words, to the ancient expectations of royal ideology (on the early Ptolemaic kings and the manner in which they are presented in Egyptian texts, see Schäfer 2011).

Official control was undergirded by an ancient ideology of hierarchy and a principle of centralizing authority, but also by patronage and “personal ties” (Bagnall 1976, p. 227). This is not very well documented, but there are hints of it. Verhoogt (1998, pp. 61–62), for example, has highlighted the relationship between Menches, the village scribe of

Kerkeosiris, and Dorion, a high-ranking official in Alexandria who may have had personal economic interests resulting from the local connection. Official letters of instruction from the period have parallels in earlier instruction literature (Crawford 1978). Two papyri are of outstanding importance for giving us the structure of the early Ptolemaic system. The first, the Revenue Laws papyrus (P.Rev.) gives us the basic hierarchy of the administrative offices in a nome concerned with crown revenue. The second, P.Tebt. III 703 (c. 210 BC), generally thought of as a memorandum from a *dioiketes* – the head of the state fiscal administration – to an *oikonomos* in a nome (in any case, to a subordinate official in a nome), provides important insights into the mentality of the system, and its reliance on the proper behavior of officials (for analysis of the text, see Samuel 1971; Huss 1980. For English translations and comments, see Austin 2006, no. 319; Bagnall and Derow 2004, no. 103). As I have stressed elsewhere (Manning 2011, p. 306):

The establishment of loyal agents throughout the state, who monitored activities and resources, and the creation of links between state institutions and key local nodes represented by Egyptian temples and their priesthoods and scribes, was, of course, a key for generating free-floating resources for the state as well as for market transactions.

P.Tebt. III 703 details the duties of the *oikonomos*, which include paying careful attention to irrigation canals, the condition of crops and animals (and the adjudication of complaints in these areas), and transportation, especially of grain to the city of Alexandria – always of central importance to the kings, particularly in periods of crisis (on the control of agricultural production, see Crawford 1971; Cuvigny 1985). The auditing of the revenues generated in the nome was another prime concern.

On the protection of the food supply to Alexandria, the *dioiketes* urged in the memorandum P.Tebt. III 703, 3.70-87 (translation Bagnall and Derow 2004: no. 103):

Take care that the grain in the nomes, with the exception of that expended on the spot for seed and of that which cannot be transported by water, be brought down – It will thus be [easy] to load the grain on the first [ships] presenting themselves; and devote yourself to such business in no cursory fashion – Take care also that the prescribed supplies of grain, of which I send you a list, are brought down to Alexandria punctually, not only correct in amount but also tested and fit for use.

The reward for good behavior was the promise of promotion to a higher office, although it is difficult to know how embedded this custom was (Crawford 1978). The expectation for careful control and for officials monitoring other officials was extensive, and the text as we have it is perhaps a standard text issued widely throughout the kingdom.

7.3 Administrative Control of Egypt

The papyri provide a lot of information on the administrative organization, although one has to reconstruct the overall picture from hundreds of individual cases, and we do not have full information across the whole of Egypt, or its external possessions. Ostraca illuminate the lower levels of fiscal administration (Muhs 2005a, 2011). Much remains unknown for Ptolemy I's reign, and it is presumed that there was some time lag between

the state's formal founding and its subsequent administrative or bureaucratic structure. It appears to have taken at least a couple of generations to gain administrative control of Upper Egypt. The Fayum received special attention during the first half of the third century BC, because of the land reclamation and settlement projects.

The basic structure of Ptolemaic governance followed ancient lines (O'Connor 1983), connecting villages to nomes and from nome *metropoleis* to regional centers, thence to the capital at Alexandria. There were two basic bureaucracies with parallel structures, as in the New Kingdom: one civil/fiscal, the other military (Huss 2011).

7.3.1 *Civil/Fiscal Administrative Structure*

The Greek cities of Alexandria, Ptolemais, and Naucratis remained set apart in terms of governance, having their own set of institutions and laws; although we do not know for certain if early Ptolemaic Alexandria had a *boule*, Alexandria did have other organs of a polis (Fraser 1972, pp. 93–131; Huss 2011, pp. 15–28). Ptolemais, the southern capital founded by Ptolemy I, served as a counterpart to Alexandria, and did have many of the political organs of a Greek polis (Vallet 2015).

Royal correspondence was coordinated from the capital, whence came responses of various kinds, laws, regulations, and instructions from the king (e.g. *prostagmata*). The *epistolographos* or “head of royal correspondence” and the *hypomnematographos* or “king’s chancellor,” in charge of the royal records, led the respective departments of the royal chancellery, but we lack details about the central administration in Alexandria.

The area outside of the territories of the Greek cities was called the *chora* or “countryside.” The two basic physical subdivisions of Egyptian administration in the *chora* were Upper and Lower Egypt – a distinction that went back to pre-dynastic times. Alexander himself appointed two (Egyptian) “nomarchs” to govern Egypt, reflecting ancient practice (Arrian, *Anabasis* 3.5). Administrative control of Egypt was further divided into subunits called “nomes” (for a detailed account of the history and the development of administration up through the Saite Period, see Moreno García 2013; Warburton 2013 summarizes the overall system more briefly). The number of nomes was notionally fixed at 42, but the actual number fluctuated throughout Egyptian history, as did the ability of the king to control local administrative officials (Huss 2011, pp. 91–97; Diodorus Siculus I 54.3 and the mid-third century BC Revenue Laws, P.Rev., give 36 nomes, with the Thebaid considered one single one). Governance in some regions was structured uniquely, as in the Fayum and the Thebaid (see later).

It is not easy to give a brief overview of the Ptolemaic offices in the *chora*, as some continued old practices, others were newly introduced, responsibilities shifted in the course of the period, some were combined, some (e.g. the *sitologos*, “head of the public granary”) are found on several levels (nome, district, village) simultaneously, and the role of officials of the same level is complicated. Military, police, financial/economic, administrative, and judicial responsibilities were not strictly separated. On the basis of the Greek verbal roots of the offices’ names, Falivene (1991, 2009) suggests a separation of spheres (leading (*ag-* as in *strategos*), managing (*arch-*), recording (*graph-*), and supervising (*oik-* the state’s household); in the course of time, the differences became blurred, and thus, for instance, the recording officials (e.g. the *komogrammateis*) assumed managing tasks (of e.g. the komarchs) (Table 7.1).

Table 7.1 The main Ptolemaic officials.

	<i>Greek term</i>	<i>Demotic term</i>	<i>Notes</i>
<i>Central level</i>			
Minister of finances	<i>dioiketes</i>	<i>snty</i>	
Vice minister of finances	<i>hypodioiketes</i>		
Minister in charge of non-recurring income	<i>Head of the idios logos</i>		First century BC
Chief accountant	<i>eklogistes</i>		
Minister of justice	<i>archidikastes</i>		
Governor of the <i>chora</i>	<i>epistrategos</i>		Early second century BC
Inspector of temple land	<i>phritob</i>	<i>p3 bry idb</i>	Mid-second century BC
Head of royal correspondence	<i>epistolographos</i>		
King's chancellor	<i>hypomnematographos</i>		
<i>Nome level</i>			
	<i>nomos</i>	<i>tš</i> (<i>qḥ</i> see Thebaid)	
Nome governor	<i>nomarches</i>		Replaced in third century BC by <i>strategos</i>
	<i>strategos</i>	<i>srtks</i>	
Royal scribe	<i>basilikos grammateus</i>	<i>sh n Pr-3</i>	
Superintendent, mainly of finances	<i>epimeletes</i>	<i>p3-mlts</i>	Several tasks taken over by the <i>epi ton prosodon</i>
Supervisor of revenues	<i>ho epi ton prosodon</i>		Second century BC, combined with office of <i>strategos</i>
Accountant	<i>eklogistes</i>		
Bailiff	<i>praktor</i>	<i>prktr</i>	
"Steward	<i>oikonomos</i>	<i>3wqnwmws</i>	Disappeared after 84 BC (BGU 14 2370)
"Checking scribe	<i>antigraphheus</i>		
"Head of public granary	<i>sitologos</i>	<i>stlwqs</i>	
"Head of public bank	<i>trapezites</i>		
"Tax farmer of a particular tax (private person)	<i>telones</i>		Taxes collected in tandem by <i>telones</i> and <i>logentes</i>
"Tax collector of a particular tax (official)	<i>logentes</i>		
<i>District level and tax area</i>			
	<i>topos/toparchia</i>	<i>qḥ/ m3^c/^c.wy.w</i>	
	<i>kato toparchia</i>	<i>n3^c.wy.w mḥt</i>	
	<i>ano toparchia</i>	<i>n3^c.wy.w rsy</i>	
District head	<i>toparches</i>	<i>shn n m3^c/ shn n3^c.wy.w</i>	
District scribe	<i>topogrammateus</i>	<i>sh n m3^c/ sh n3^c.wy.w</i>	
<i>Village level</i>			
	<i>kome</i>	<i>tmy</i>	
Mayor	<i>epistates</i> of a village	<i>3pystts</i>	
Village head	<i>komarches</i>	<i>shn n tmy</i>	
Village scribe	<i>komogrammateus</i>	<i>sh n tmy</i>	

(Continued)

Table 7.1 (Continued)

	<i>Greek term</i>	<i>Demotic term</i>	<i>Notes</i>
<i>Varia</i>			
Greek notary	<i>agoranomos</i>		
Temple notary	<i>monographos</i>	<i>sh</i> of a temple	
Temple inspector	<i>epistates</i> of one temple <i>epistates</i> of a group of temples in a region	<i>p3 rmt nty sn</i>	
Temple director	<i>lesonis</i> or <i>archiereus</i> of one temple	<i>mr sn</i>	
<i>Fayum</i>			
	<i>Limne</i>	<i>P3-tš-n-p3-ym</i>	
	<i>Arsinoites</i>	<i>P3-tš-n-3rsyn3</i>	
Nome governor, etc.; see nome level			
Extra level: 3 <i>merides</i>			
Head of a <i>meris</i>	<i>meridarches</i>	<i>shn tny.t</i>	Late third century BC
District level:			
District head	<i>nomarches</i> (“little” nomarch), <i>toparches</i>		Replaced in late third century BC by toparch
Village level: see above			
<i>Thebaid</i>			
	<i>Thebais</i>	<i>P3-tš-n-Nw.t</i>	
Governor of the Thebaid	<i>strategos</i> of the Thebaid	<i>srtks</i>	Often combined with office of <i>epistrategos</i>
Supervisor of revenues of the Thebaid	<i>thebarch</i> or <i>ho epi ton prosodon</i>		
Governor of a group of nomes in the Thebaid	<i>strategos</i>	<i>srtks</i>	
Governor of one nome in the Thebaid	<i>epistates</i> of a nome; in the first century BC, also nome <i>strategos</i>	<i>3pystts</i>	Thebaid nomes called <i>qh</i> in early Demotic
District and village level: see above			

^aThis office is attested on both the nome and lower levels.

Some officials were in charge of a larger territory, among them the high officials in Alexandria, in charge – in theory – of the entire state system, and of Ptolemais, where the administration of Upper Egypt was situated. The *dioiketes* was probably an ancient office dating back at least to the Persian Period and called *snty* or “manager” in Hieroglyphic and Demotic sources (Yoyotte 1989; Falivene 1991, pp. 214–215); he came to be in charge mainly of the country’s financial and economic matters. The offices of vice-*dioiketes* (*hypodioiketes*) and local *dioiketes* also existed (Mooren 1977, pp. 136–158). A separate

account, the *idios logos*, for non-recurring income from, say, confiscated property, was established after the Great Revolt of 206–186 BC (P.Erbstreit 1), but just a century later it came under the authority of a newly installed official (the *pros toi idioi logoi*, eventually simply called *idios logos*). An *epistrategos* governed a large territory, probably the entire *chora*, as for instance Komanos, the general who had defeated the rebels in the south in 186 BC, and Boethos, who supervised at least some areas in Middle Egypt and the entire Thebaid (Kramer 2009, p. 324; P. Yale IV, pp. 138–152).

At the nome level, there were three basic offices: nomarch, *oikonomos* (“steward”), and *basilikos grammateus* (“royal scribe”), responsible, respectively, for agrarian production, taxation, and record-keeping, primarily with conditions of land and land tenure. The “checking scribe” (*antigraphheus*) assisted the *oikonomos* and was responsible for accurate record-keeping. The ancient office of nomarch (Falivene 1991) was replaced in the third century BC by a *strategos*: originally, as the name implies, a military title, but by the late third century BC a civil official who was the superior of all other nome officials. The military functions of *strategoï* remained, but their important duties concerned public revenues; hence, they became “supervisors of revenues” (*ho epi ton prosodon*; Mooren 1975, p. 21) at the expense of the *epimeletes*. The *oikonomoi* eventually disappeared from the record as an office; their financial responsibilities were taken over by colleague-officials (Armoni 2012).

Below these nome officials were those in charge of a smaller territorial unit (Falivene 1991, p. 222); the district or *toparchy* (*m3ꜥ/ ʿ.wy.w*), and the village or *kome* (*tmy*). The toparch and komarch were the subordinate of the nomarch, while the work of the district and village scribes was supervised by the royal scribe; in the later Ptolemaic Period, the offices of district and village scribe become the more prominent. We learn a good deal about the latter official from the Menches archive of the late second century BC at Kerkeosiris, a small village in the Fayum (Verhoogt 1998). This archive provides the most detailed information for the administration of a village for the entire period. The village scribe, the *komogrammateus*, was the backbone of the Ptolemaic control of resources, under the supervision of the royal scribe, who functioned as the link between villages and the state apparatus (see Armoni 2012 for an excellent study of the royal scribe office). Alongside the komarch and *komogrammateus*, a village *epistates* was appointed, who had police and administrative responsibilities.

The structure of the nome administration is laid out in detail in a letter as follows (P.Gen. III 132.1–5, of the second century BC; there are many parallels to this kind of address to nome officials: Huss 2011, pp. 47–50):

To the *strategos* of the Herakleopolite nome, to the chief of the garrison, to the one in charge of the police, to the nomarch, to the one responsible for the revenues, to the steward, to the royal scribe, to the controller, to the toparchs, to the district scribes, to the komarchs, to the village scribes, to the chief of police, to the police, to the farmers and to other personnel concerned with royal business...

Administration thus followed two kinds of boundary: physical and social. As earlier in Egyptian history, local networks of governance supervised agricultural production and social relations.

The Fayum, a special area of concern for the Ptolemies, and called the Arsinoite nome after the death of Ptolemy II's sister/wife, had a different structure (Derda 2006). At first, the

region was divided into two parts by a central canal, the Henet of Moeris (Vandorpe 2004), but after a successful reclamation project instituted by the Ptolemies and the foundation of new settlements, the administration reorganized the enlarged region into three *merides* – the Herakleides, Polemon, and Themistos – led by a meridarch (an office that is poorly attested). Alongside the nomarch on the nome level, the Fayum had “lesser” nomarchs, who had control of smaller districts (nomarchies) that would be replaced by toparchies in the 230s BC (Clarysse 1997; map P.Sorb. III: 54; on toparchies, see also Samuel 1966). A recently discovered milestone marker found at Bir ‘Iayyan in the desert east of Edfu, however, shows us that a tripartite structure – in this specific case inferred by the title “toparch of the three?” – also existed in the Edfu region in the third century BC (Bagnall et al. 1996).

The Greek polis of Ptolemais served as the administrative center for all of Upper Egypt, called the Thebaid. This new city functioned as a counterpart to the influence and dominance of the ancient city of Thebes and its great temple of Amun at Karnak. Greek in origin, it gradually recruited its elite locally, and thus contributed considerably to the development of an Upper Egyptian aristocracy (Vallet 2015). The *strategos* of the Thebaid, an official responsible for the fiscal system of the south and the administration of law, was based in Ptolemais, as were others in charge of legal administration. The large area of the Thebaid (Greek *Thebais*, Demotic *p3 tš n Niwt*) was initially administered as a single nome with one *strategos*, one royal scribe, one steward, and so forth, and was further divided into “sub”-nomes with their own administrations, reflecting the Late Period structure of the area (P.Hou, pp. 37–40). More administrative control of the Thebaid was established in the wake of a period of sometimes violent social unrest. This tighter control included the installation of new military camps, public granaries and banks, and Greek notarial offices (Vandorpe and Waebens 2010a, pp. 38–50), and the appointment of civil *strategoï* in charge of a group of Thebaid nomes. Eventually, the Thebaid administration was brought into line with the rest of the country: the governors (*epistatai*) who had been in charge of a single Thebaid nome were all upgraded to *strategoï* (Thomas 1975, pp. 53–54, 132–136).

7.3.2 *Fiscal System*

The fiscal interest of the state, the so-called “Économie royale,” concerned with taxation and its administration, was – together with military mobilization and protection of the cities – the main concern of Ptolemaic administration. Many of the previously mentioned civil officials were at some level responsible for fiscal matters. In the course of the period, their responsibilities shifted on the nome level, to the advantage of the royal scribe. The Ptolemaic fiscal system relied on the registration of people and their livestock (cf. census lists, P.Count) and on the local recording and reporting of information on land tenure, land conditions, and crops grown (cf. land surveys and crop reports, Verhoogt 1998; Monson 2012b). Household and occupation were used as the basic organizing principle in the census lists, while land types (royal, cleruchic, temple land, etc.) dominated the land surveys. The village scribe played the key role in compiling these lists, with responsibility for local reports, meeting with district scribes and the royal scribe in the nome capital, and having village accounts vetted by the *dioiketes* in Alexandria and the latter’s immediate subordinate the *eklogistes* or chief “accountant” (an annual “agenda” of scribal activities is reconstructed by Verhoogt 1998, pp. 142–146).

The registration of persons, livestock, and property was a feature of Ptolemaic administration reaching back to pharaonic times, although the papyri bias our viewpoint toward rural villages rather than the cities. The census was linked to the collection of the salt tax, the main head tax (paid in coin) of the period, although the connection between the census and “the fiscal activities that followed” is not well known (Clarysse and Thompson 2006, 2, p. 30). The military had a separate census (Clarysse and Thompson 2006, 2, p. 31). A new calendar, known as the “financial year,” was an innovation of the Ptolemaic system (although it did not survive long), but there is no evidence to suggest that there was a periodic census, as there was under Roman rule. The census of persons and animals, and the documentation of property, were perhaps operations that occurred irregularly, with annual updates (Clarysse and Thompson 2006, 2, p. 19; P.Haun. IV 70). A more “systematic” requirement to register property connected to the imposition of a 2% tax was imposed in the reign of Ptolemy III (C.Ord.Ptol. 28, 229 BC; Clarysse and Thompson 2006, 2, p. 25).

Most Ptolemaic taxes were, as before, paid in kind (mainly wheat) to the local granary under the supervision of a *sitologos*. Money taxes were newly introduced and were farmed out. Tax farming was probably derived from Athenian practice, although there are some parallels to earlier Persian traditions (Harper 1934a; Préaux 1939, pp. 450–459; Rostovtzeff 1941, pp. 328–330; Bingen 1978b; Turner 1984; Manning 2010). The terminology is Athenian as well, but the Ptolemaic system is different in that the tax farmer (*telones*), a private person who was awarded the contract with the highest bid, was controlled by a state official (*logentes*), who assisted in the collection. *Telonai*, backed up by sureties, could farm one or several taxes in one or several districts, or one tax could be farmed by a chief farmer and his partners (*metochoi*) (Harper 1934b). The basic administrative unit for tax collection was the district (*topos* or toparchy); for example, the Edfu nome, called the Apollonopolite, had in the Late Ptolemaic Period four tax districts: the lower (*kato*) and upper (*ano*) toparchy, the Arabia (the east bank of the nome), and the metropolis area (Apollonopolis Magna). The *oikonomos* (and later the royal scribe) supervised the tax collection on the nome level, while a *praktor* acted as bailiff: an official who would become a tax collector himself in Roman times.

7.3.3 Military Administration

Military power throughout Ptolemaic history was of central importance to governance, and its organizational capacity had profound effects on local society (Fischer-Bovet 2014; for one important military family in the first century BC, see Thissen 1977). Here, too, settlement of soldiers in garrisons and cleruchs in the Egyptian *chora* was a strategy of royal control of territory.

The Ptolemaic military had its own administrative hierarchy, including “army scribes” (Lesquier 1911 is now replaced by Fischer-Bovet 2014; on “army scribes,” see Clarysse and Thompson 2006, 2, p. 31; see further Chapter 11). The military structure was reorganized in the 160s BC, a period of considerable socioeconomic stress (Sekunda 2001; Fischer-Bovet 2014, pp. 116–159). Cleruchs were controlled by *strategoi* (Armoni 2012, pp. 186–204), while eponymous commanders controlled military units (Fischer-Bovet and Clarysse 2012). Elite troops had their own organization.

As in the military, there was a hierarchy of police (for further details, see Chapter 11).

7.3.4 *A Bureaucratic Organization*

An emphasis on writing, through the use of written orders and circular letters, is clear, as is the reaction of officials in response to flow in the opposite direction: petitions from wronged parties (on petitions, see P. Enteux.; Bauschatz 2013). Although petitions could be addressed to high officials, the resolution of complaints was handled at the local level (on a petition to the *dioiketes*, see e.g. Lá'da and Papathomas 2003; see for example the notice of a public auction that details the procedures of the sale of property at auction, P. Eleph. 14 = W Chrest. 340; Sel. Pap. II 233; Manning 1999). The most important text, and certainly the most interesting for the later Ptolemaic bureaucracy, records a petition and the administrative response to it (UPZ I 14, Saqqara, 158 BC). This petition, by Ptolemy the Recluse in the Serapeum at Memphis, asking the visiting king and queen to enroll his brother in the army (Wilcken 1927, pp. 150–171), provides good evidence of the bureaucratic papyrus trail that it generated. The response took five months, and generated at least another 32 documents, illustrating the intersection of royal and military bureaucracies. P. Hib. I 110 verso also gives a hint at the two-way flow and the control of correspondence between the king and the *dioiketes* in Alexandria and officials in the provinces (c. 255 BC. W. Chr. 435; Austin 2006, no. 309; Bagnall and Derow 2004, no. 86; Sel. Pap. II 397). It is noteworthy that the hour of delivery is also recorded in this daybook (Remijsen 2007). Overall, the impression of the Ptolemaic system suggests at least the pretense of tight control, and the generation of a great deal of paperwork (Clarysse and Thompson 2006, 2, p. 26). To a certain extent, a new bureaucratic language was developed (Clarysse and Thompson 2006, 2, p. 34).

7.4 The Administration of External Territories

The Ptolemies controlled an extensive territory outside of Egypt (see Chapter 3). These territories were not governed in any uniform way (Bagnall 1976, p. 213; Huss 2011, pp. 140–178). Regional governors, military commanders by and large, called *strategoi*, represented the Ptolemaic state. Other officials with “regional name + *-archos*” titles also appear in our sources. In the League of Islanders, a strategy developed by Ptolemy II to control the Aegean islands, a *nesiarch* was appointed (Meadows 2013; Meadows and Thonemann 2013). An *oikonomos* was, in general, in charge of the economic administrative of a province (Bagnall 1976, pp. 224–229). Flexibility of the system is the overall impression of the control of external possessions, which served both as a “defensive fence,” to quote Polybius (5.34.2–9), and a resource endowment for the Ptolemies.

7.5 Law, Legal Order, and the Administration of Justice

The entire system of justice may have been administered from Alexandria by the *archidikastes*, about whom not much is known (Wolff 1962; Bagnall 1976, p. 7). The administration of justice was complex. Disputes, as in ancient times, could be resolved

by local officials, but also in the court system. The nome *strategos* was the key state official, who often delegated cases to the proper authorities. In one important court record written in Demotic, a dispute over land ownership began with a petition to the *strategos*, who referred it to the local Egyptian court (the *laokritai*) presided over by priests attached to the temple in whose domain the land sat (Manning 2017). It has been assumed that Ptolemaic state building did not substantially change the underlying Egyptian legal system, but merely added to it by accommodating Greek-language legal instruments and Greek courts (Allam 2008).

Texts such as the Hermopolis Legal Code (Mattha 1975; see Lippert 2004 on types of Egyptian codes), a kind of form book offering hypothetical legal cases for a wide range of Demotic legal texts dated to the third century BC, but reflecting also to some extent ancient traditions, show us that Egyptian legal practice was maintained. The hundreds of Demotic private contracts reinforce this. But there were also, probably, subtle changes to the Egyptian system, at least in terms of procedure, as well as the state monitoring of the system. An *eisagogeus*, a Ptolemaic official who introduced the case before the judges, acted as an official representative of the state. Royal “decrees” or “ordinances” (*prostigmata*) continued an ancient tradition of royal legislation (Lenger 1964 with addenda Lenger 1990).

Egyptian law was adjudicated through priestly tribunals, *laokritai*, and through petitions to officials. A new feature of the administration of justice was the *dikasteria*: courts appointed in the nomes to hear disputes between Greeks, primarily soldiers. The *chrematistai* was another newly introduced court of judges, appointed by the crown to try fiscal and civic cases over all population groups. The intricate connection between Ptolemaic civil and Egyptian legal authority is well displayed by the Asyut family dispute, where we can see that local Ptolemaic officials responded to private petitions and referred the dispute back to the jurisdiction of the local temple in whose estate the disputed land was located. A state official (the *eisagogeus*) was also present at this trial (Manning n.d.). The Erbstreit papyri recording an inheritance dispute between three parties show the different ways in which people in the *chora* could go to court: the village *epistates* first tried to settle the lawsuit amicably, but the case was successively dealt with by the *strategos*, the council of the *epistrategos*, the *epistrategos* himself, and finally the court of the *chrematistai*, after which no new appeal was possible (P.Erbstreit).

7.6 The Role of Temple and Local Elites in Administration

The elite in the period consisted of military officers – cavalry being the most important – and higher levels of the priesthoods in the many temples throughout Egypt; local scribal families, who were the backbone of the entire system; and others such as the Theban banking families (on elites and sub-elites, see further Chapter 18). The fundamental continuity in scribal practice, and the control of scribal offices through families, is seen both in the important role played by temple notaries in the issuance of Demotic legal agreements (Zauzich 1968) and in the new office of the Greek notary scribes, the *agoranomoi*, in some towns in Upper Egypt, held in the main by Egyptians (Pestman 1978).

Temples were a vital part of local and regional economies and administrative centers, and were “centers of public life,” as Quaegebeur (1979, p. 717) puts it, and thus an integral part of Ptolemaic governance. Nowhere is this clearer than in the close relationship between the Ptolemaic kings and the high priestly family in Memphis (Thompson 2012). The priests of Ptah at the ancient temple in Memphis were of particular importance to the Ptolemaic dynasty, and served as “a focus of relations between king and cult, between Ptolemy and temple” (Thompson 2012, p. 101). The temple was a center for the royal cult and for some of the priestly synods, and a place the Ptolemies visited frequently (for the development of ruler cult, a successful strategy in binding elites to the dynasty, see further Chapter 27). Its high priests could serve as liaisons between the state and temple finances; this was true in other important temples, as well (Thompson’s 2012, pp. 99–143, survey serves as a good starting point). The priesthood at Memphis was loyal to the dynasty throughout the period.

The temple-*epistates* was a royal appointee responsible for monitoring temple finances, but in fact most temples maintained their own affairs, albeit with state oversight (Clarysse 2003). Ptolemaic administration integrated priests and temple into the state. State finance relied on elites, primarily Greek-speaking, in the farming of money taxes and in banking (Vandorpe and Clarysse 2008). An elaborate court hierarchy that bound elites to the king was created in the reign of Ptolemy V (or arguably under his father’s reign, Abd El-Fattah et al. 2014) and further developed under his successors, ranging from the most prestigious title of “kinsman” (*syngenes*) to the least prestigious of “one of the successors” (*diadochoi*) or “one of the bodyguards” (*somatophylakes*). The attribution of a honorific title was not a personal favor, but was linked to the bearer’s office; hence, a higher ranking *dioiketes*, for instance, enjoyed a higher court title than his subordinate *strategoi* (Mooren 1975, 1977; Moyer 2011a; a larger perspective is presented in Strootman 2014).

The role of soldiers in temple-building has been highlighted by Fisher-Bovet (2014, pp. 329–362). Priests who were also soldiers are well known in Memphis and other places. Among the more striking material from the period is the often discussed stele of the military/priestly family from second-century BC Edfu. The paired sets of Greek and Egyptian funerary stelae, one with poetry by Herodes, the other with pure Egyptian Hieroglyphic funerary inscriptions, show that members of the same family were both military officers and priests attached to the temple there (Yoyotte 1969; Clarysse 1985, pp. 62–64; see further Chapter 19).

7.7 A Broader View of Ptolemaic Governance

Even though our evidence does not permit us to write a detailed history of Ptolemaic administration over three centuries, we can be certain that there was considerable historical development. To be sure, the bureaucratic system in the second and first centuries BC differed from that of the third century (Falivene 1991). Comparison to other bureaucratic systems, rarely done, should be undertaken. There is no space here to treat even cursorily the role of war in Ptolemaic state-building (for classic treatments, see the literature cited in Kiser and Yong 2003, pp. 513–515; Tilly 1992; for one recent overview of the issues centered on medieval Japan, see Ferejohn and Rosenbluth 2010; for the Ptolemaic Period,

see Fischer-Bovet 2014, pp. 49–51; for war and state-building from a cultural evolutionary perspective, see Turchin et al. 2013). A basic model in which war forced a more “efficient” bureaucracy and improved the technology of monitoring (e.g. better roads, a postal system, better record-keeping) works well for Egypt.

The New Kingdom and the Ptolemaic states, the two phases of Egyptian history with the most extensive imperial territories, can both be understood in this context; both periods saw increased external war and the development of parallel civil and military bureaucracies. The New Kingdom bureaucracy may have remained “overwhelmingly patrimonial,” while the Ptolemaic system was perhaps less constrained by a landed aristocracy and thus able to recruit agents more readily (Finer 1997, p. 190; Kiser and Yong 2003, p. 515). The Ptolemaic bureaucratic system was unique, combining features of the ancient patrimonial system with new Hellenistic fiscal institutions and operating in two languages. The two famous texts that I discussed briefly (P.Rev. and P.Tebt. III 703) are suggestive both of the scale of the new system and of the bureaucratization process that resulted, among other things, in the administration of a legal system that appears to have been effective even at a time of severe internal crisis and external threat. The Ptolemaic administration, whether it impeded economic growth or not (impossible to measure in any case), and however more effective or efficient it was compared to earlier systems, should also be judged by its ability to maintain the internal equilibrium of society. The historic lessons for modern Egyptian reform should be clear. There is no better case than Egypt for understanding the persistence of bureaucracy. But along with “efficiency” and “economic growth,” any reformed civil-service system should also consider its historic role in creating social stability and in instilling a strong sense of justice.

FURTHER READING

A good orientation for the structure and development of Egyptian administrative practices over the long run can be found in Moreno García (2013), surveys of pharaonic administration in Haring (2010), and surveys of Greco-Roman period administration in Derda (2006) and Rowlandson (2010); for economic structures, see also Eyre (2010), Kehoe (2010), and Muhs (2016). For a good overview of officials, see Huss (2011), and for their court titles, see Mooren (1975). Prosopographies of officials are to be found in Pros. Ptol. and TM People. Petitions to officials are a valuable corpus through which to understand the operations of the local administration; the primary publication may be found in P. Enteux.

CHAPTER EIGHT

The Branches of Roman and Byzantine Government and the Role of Cities, the Church, and Elite Groups

Thomas Kruse

8.1 Between Tradition and Innovation

The administration of Egypt after the Roman takeover in 30 BC following the victory of the younger Caesar (Octavian) over Marc Antony and Cleopatra VII has to be regarded according to two different aspects: the continuity of the administrative institutions that the Romans had inherited from the former Ptolemaic kings on the one hand, and the introduction of administrative offices by the new rulers of the country on the other. The general tendency of the development of the administration and bureaucracy of Egypt in the Roman and Byzantine eras was nevertheless one toward a “Romanization” of the government of the province: as time passed, the “Roman” elements of the administrative systems gained more and more importance, at the expense of the institutions and offices that had been taken over from the Ptolemies. In the course of this process, some specific peculiarities of the country’s administrative system gradually became less important or even disappeared, and the general scheme of the provincial government of Egypt and the status of the country was gradually adjusted to that of the other provinces of the Roman Empire. This process, which unfolded over centuries, picked up speed toward the end of the era of the Roman Principate in the later third century AD and in connection with the reforms of Diocletian and Constantine, and was more or less completed in the later “Byzantine” Period (as papyrologists tend to style the Late Antique history of Egypt between Diocletian and the Arab conquest); that is, in the fifth to sixth centuries AD.

Although the elements of administrative continuity with the Ptolemaic era at the beginning of Roman rule over Egypt and beyond are undisputed, it has to be stressed that there was no direct continuity between the rule of the Ptolemaic kings and the Roman emperors. The Roman *princeps* by no means assumed the kingship of the Ptolemies, and his governor, the *praefectus Alexandriae et Aegypti*, was not a viceroy (as was, for example, the governor of British India), who ruled the country as a domain of the crown and more or less regarded it as the private property of the emperor. This latter was an influential thesis among scholars of the past, first proposed by one of the *archegetai* of modern scholarship in ancient history, Theodor Mommsen. On this view, Mommsen and those following him established the thesis that Egypt possessed some exceptional legal status (“Sonderstellung”) vis-à-vis the other provinces of the Roman Empire. However, even the new rulers themselves emphasized the breach – and not the continuity – with Ptolemaic rule, when Gaius Cornelius Gallus, the first governor of Egypt, in his famous trilingual (i.e. Latin, Greek, and Egyptian) inscription on the island of Philae on the southern border of the province, claimed that “after the total defeat of the kings at the hands of Caesar, the son of god, I am the first prefect of Alexandria and Egypt” (I.Philae II 128; Hoffmann et al. 2009; see also Chapter 34). This breach is also illustrated by the fact that no Roman emperor was ever crowned as pharaoh (as were the Ptolemaic kings), as well as by the establishment of a new calendar by which the years were counted beginning with the Roman conquest of Egypt by Octavian (e.g. P.Fay. 89; although it was abandoned some years later due to its inconvenience compared to the traditional counting of rulers’ years).

8.2 The Duties of the Prefect

After the integration of Egypt into the Roman Empire, Augustus decided to entrust its administration to members of the equestrian order, not the senatorial class, from which provincial governors had been picked under the republic. The equestrian order was reorganized by the first *princeps*, and henceforth its members depended solely on the emperor, with no interference from the Senate. This solution was meant to prevent a potential senatorial rival of the emperor from using the wealthy province as a base for a potential usurpation of the imperial power (Tacitus, *Annales* 2.59). Although this eventuality never materialized, the country’s administration by Roman knights proved successful, and was therefore maintained by succeeding emperors. A main reason for this success was that the equestrian order had become a part of the administrative ruling elite, and there thus evolved a military and administrative equestrian career structure, in which the equestrian offices of the administration of Egypt became a vital element. In particular, the office of prefect of Egypt was (together with that of the procuratorial prefect) the undisputed highlight of an equestrian career, and surely an important incentive for entering such a career.

Since the recruitment of a high-ranking governor of an important province was unprecedented, Augustus was eager to ensure that the *praefectus Alexandriae et Aegypti* enjoyed the same power and range of competences (*imperium*) as the senatorial governors of other provinces, and thus implemented a law before the assembly of the Roman people bestowing upon the prefect of Egypt an *imperium* “equal to that of a proconsul”

(*ad similitudinem proconsulis*), as confirmed by the Roman jurist Ulpian (*Digesta* 1.17.1). Analysis of numerous documentary papyri dating from the Roman Principate (unknown to Theodor Mommsen) confirms a statement by the geographer Strabo (17.1.12), a contemporary of Augustus, that after its conquest by the later first Roman *princeps*, Egypt became an *eparcheia* (the Greek term for the Latin *provincia*), and thus was a Roman province like any other Roman province.

A central element of continuity in the administrative structure can be found at the lower levels of the hierarchy in the offices of the local bureaucracy of the Egyptian *chora*. This was mainly based on the ancient (indeed, pre-Ptolemaic) administrative division of the country, with the “nome” (Greek *nomos*) as its basic unit, administered by officials who resided in the nome capital or, in Greek, *metropolis*. The number of nomes changed from time to time, and thus cannot be fixed for a given period, but in total there were about 40 in the *chora*. This basic structure of the administrative geography of Egypt remained more or less intact until the reforms of Diocletian by the end of the third century AD, when the former nome *metropoleis* slowly evolved into *civitates* and the former nomes into their respective territories.

When we turn now to the single branches of the provincial government, it should first be noted that one should not be tempted by the term “branch” to regard the administrative system of the province of Egypt in any way in terms of the modern concept of “separation of powers,” since according to a general rule in premodern governments, many administrative officials of the provincial government possessed both executive and judicial functions. One can even say that the *praefectus Aegypti* (Jördens 2009), as the governor of the province, also had legislative competences, as the edicts issued by him had the power of law in the territory of the province. This is mainly due to the Roman concept of *imperium*, going back to the times of the early Roman Republic, which (through the Senate) bestowed upon a magistrate wide-ranging executive and judicial powers, and which remained intact also under the Principate – although the magisterial *imperium* was now more or less a derivative and dependent of the overarching and overriding power (*imperium maius*) of the emperor.

As already noted, the Latin title of the governor was *praefectus Alexandriae et Aegypti*, pointing to the fact that Alexandria, although the capital of the province, was not regarded as part of Egypt (the *chora*). In Greek, the official translation of the title was *eparchos Aigyptou*, but in most of the papyrus documents preserved from Egypt he is simply referred to as the *hegemon*. The governor resided in Alexandria, as did the heads of the other departments of the province’s central administration, all of them Roman knights of procuratorial rank who were (like the prefect himself) appointed by the Roman emperor.

The most prominent manifestations of the powers and responsibilities of the prefect in the extant sources can be gathered mainly by way of his edicts and his rulings in the course of the annual *conventus*, when he visited a couple of prominent places in the Nile Delta and Middle and Upper Egypt and (with other officials of the central administration) presided over cases brought for his judgment (Foti Talamanca 1974; Haensch 1997). Minutes of such proceedings are sometimes preserved in the papyrus documents from Egypt. But it was not only on the occasion of a *conventus* that the prefect, who also acted as chief judge of the province, could be petitioned by any person who considered him- or herself to be wronged. He could not, of course, hear every case, but he could appoint judges for this

purpose (*iudices pedanei*), or remit a case to the lower instance (e.g. the nome *strategos*), which then had to settle it. This applied only to civil cases, since criminal cases and capital punishment fell within the sole competence of the prefect, as he alone possessed the *ius gladii*. The *conventus* was also an opportunity for the local population to hand over petitions directly to the prefect: an opportunity that must have been widely taken, since in a document dated around AD 209 we are informed that the governor Subatianus Aquila, during his stay in the capital of the Arsinoite nome (in the course of a *conventus*), received in a little less than three days no fewer than 1804 petitions (P.Yale I 61).

The term *dialogismos* (as the Latin *conventus* was translated into Greek) points to another important function of the prefect's *conventus*: the regular review of the lower levels of the enchoric administration. To this end, its officials had to appear in person at the *conventus* in order to render account of their actions.

A great number of lower-level administrative staff were attached to the office of the governor. Among the most important were the *eklogistai* ("accountants" or "auditors"). Like the leading officials of the nomes (*strategoi* and royal scribes) they were recruited from the indigenous elite. One *eklogistes* was responsible for a single nome, and thus in a way "mirrored" the responsibility of a nome *strategos* on the level of the central administration. Their main task was to review the taxes and revenues of the nome administrators, check their actions, and report on these matters to the prefect. Such information was important in preparing the annual audit of the local administration on the occasion of the *conventus*.

Not surprisingly, the issues that the *praefectus Aegypti* could address in his edicts were various and manifold. They could concern routine matters or deal ad hoc with specific problems. Among the latter are measures against the abuse of power by certain officials, particularly in connection with illegal extortion of taxes from the inhabitants of the province (as in the famous and long edict of the prefect Tiberius Julius Alexander from AD 68; I.Prose 57) or unjustified (i.e. not authorized) claims for the provision of means of transport, board, and lodging by which traveling officials often harassed the local population – a notorious problem with which governors had to deal quite regularly (see e.g. the edict of the prefect Gnaeus Vergilius Capito from AD 48; I.Prose 53). The prefect was also responsible for announcing the accession to the throne of a new emperor, as in the edict of the prefect Rammius Martialis announcing the accession of Hadrian in the summer of AD 117 (P.Oxy. LV 3781), or that of the governor Mantennius Sabinus announcing the accession of Pertinax in March 193 (BGU II 646). Among the papyrus documents from Egypt is also preserved the only known original copy of an edict issued by the chancellery of a Roman governor, namely that of the prefect Subatianus Aquila ordering the release of a person who was sentenced to work in the alabaster quarries because he had served his sentence, dated to AD 209 (SB I 4639). Routine administrative matters in prefectural edicts include the announcement of the provincial census, ordering every 13th year the head of each household to file a declaration by which he registered himself and all the individuals living in his household with the responsible local officials (the so-called *kat' oikian apographē*). For this purpose, the prefect, before announcing the census itself, ordered through another edict all individuals who were absent from their fiscal domicile – *idia* in Greek, designating the place where one was registered in the population lists – to return there in order to file their declarations (an example of such a "reintegration edict" is that of the prefect Gaius Vibius Maximus from AD 104, preserved in P.Lond. III 904) (Jördens 2009).

The prefect functioned not only as the head of the civil administration of the province, but also as the commander in chief of the troops stationed there. These consisted in the Roman legions garrisoned near Alexandria, the auxiliary forces stationed all over the country, and the provincial fleet (*classis Alexandrina*). Apart from maintaining law and order, the prefect's primary duty was to take care of the regular flow of taxes and grain out of the province and into the Roman treasury, since the people of Rome, and a great part of the Roman army in the East, depended on the regular supply of Egyptian grain. The completion of this task was, of course, delegated to the officials of the local administration in the nomes, to whom we will shortly turn. But before that, we will look at the most important offices of the central administration of the province, which were based in Alexandria.

8.3 The Roman Central Administration

Apart from the office of *iuridicus* (Greek *dikaiodotes*), a Roman innovation whose holder helped the prefect in the administration of justice and in dealing with civil law issues, and who also presided over a permanent law court in Alexandria (Kupiszewski 1953–1954), most of the offices in the central administration were responsible for financial matters, and the most important of them already existed in the Ptolemaic Period (see Table 8.1). One was the procurator of the *idios logos* (Swarney 1970). The title points to the fact that the office evolved out of the administration of a “special account,” which presumably was the former private account for the possessions of the Ptolemaic kings (as opposed to the Ptolemaic “fiscus” designated as *basilikon*). The *idios logos* oversaw irregular state income, such as confiscations and fines. A sort of an administrative rulebook called the “Gnomon of the *Idios Logos*,” first created in the time of Augustus, an abridged version of which is preserved on papyrus (BGU V 1210; P.Oxy. XLII 3014), informs us of the various offenses that could lead to the confiscation of private properties. The relevant charges are to a great extent bound up with the transgression of the boundaries of the social status groups (e.g. by falsely claiming a status which one did not actually possess, or by illegal intermarriage between members of different groups). The Romans eagerly tried to maintain rather strict borders between these groups, the most important of which were, in descending order: Romans, Alexandrians, the inhabitants of the few Greek *poleis* in Egypt (Naucratis, Ptolemais Hermiou, and Antinoopolis), and then the “Egyptians” of the *chora*, including the fiscally privileged population of the nome *metropoleis* (who paid a reduced rate on the poll tax, the *laographia*; see Chapter 18). This elite group of the *metropolitai* was formed by the gymnasial class (*ek tou gymnasion*), which consisted of the Hellenized Greek-speaking members of the gymnasium – the central institution of Greek culture and education in the nome *metropolis*. On the lowest level, finally, were the ordinary Egyptian peasants, who were fully liable to the *laographia* and thus called *laographoumenoi*. In order to maintain the borders between these social classes, the Romans created a bureaucratic procedure of admission to a status group designated as *epikrisis*, by which the male offspring was enrolled in the relevant group via application of his parents or other relatives. While the prefect himself was responsible for the enrollment of the Roman citizens, the local officials in the nomes had to execute the *epikrisis* for the tax-privileged groups of the

Table 8.1 The main officials in Roman Egypt (c. 30 BC – c. AD 284).

	<i>Terminology</i>	<i>Notes</i>
<i>Central level</i>		<i>Of equestrian rank</i>
Governor	<i>praefectus Alexandriae et Aegypti</i> (<i>eparchos Aigyptou</i> or <i>hegemon</i>)	
Minister of irregular state income	(Head of the) <i>idios logos</i>	
Minister of justice	<i>iuridicus</i> (<i>dikaiodotes</i>)	
Accountant or auditor	<i>eklogistes</i>	One for each nome
Official in charge of grain supply to Rome	<i>procurator Neas Poleos</i>	
Minister of finances	<i>dioiketes</i>	Under Hadrian and later
High priest (administrative function)	<i>archiereus</i>	Under Hadrian and later
<i>Greek cities</i>	<i>poleis</i>	
Cf. Council	<i>boule</i>	Except Alexandria (AD 201)
Cf. Assembly	<i>ekklesia</i>	
Alexandrian magistrates	<i>archontes</i>	Some with duties extending to the <i>chora</i>
Chief judge	<i>archidikastes</i>	
Head of the registry	<i>hypomnematographos</i>	
Chief magistrate	<i>exegetes</i>	
Head of gymnasium	<i>gymnasiarchos</i>	
Head of status control	<i>kosmetes</i>	
Head of provisioning	<i>eutheniarches</i>	
Head of market and chief notary	<i>agoranomos</i>	
<i>Regional level</i>	<i>chora</i>	<i>Of equestrian rank</i>
Regional governor	<i>epistrategos</i>	Three, later (second century AD) four regions: East and West Delta, Heptanomia, and Thebaid
<i>Nome level</i>	<i>nomos</i>	
Nome governor	<i>strategos</i>	
Royal scribe	<i>basilikos grammateus</i>	
<i>District level</i>	<i>toparchia</i>	
District head	<i>toparches</i>	Until mid-first century AD
District scribe	<i>topogrammateus</i>	
Collector of taxes in money/ kind ^a	<i>praktor argyrikon/sitikon</i>	
Head of granary ^a	<i>sitologos</i>	
Tax collector	<i>dekaprotos</i>	From mid-third century AD on (instead of <i>sitologos</i>)

Table 8.1 (Continued)

	<i>Terminology</i>	<i>Notes</i>
<i>Metropolitan level</i>	<i>metropolis</i>	
Magistrates	<i>archai</i>	From mid–end first century AD on
Chief magistrate	<i>exegetes</i>	
Head of gymnasium	<i>gymnasiarchos</i>	
Head of status control	<i>kosmetes</i>	
Head of provisioning	<i>eutheniarches</i>	
Head of market and chief notary	<i>agoranomos</i>	
High priest	<i>archiereus</i>	
Metropolitan scribe	<i>topogrammateus kai komogrammateus grammateus poleos phylarches amphodarches</i>	Until mid-first century AD From mid-first century AD on From mid-third century AD on
Head of metropolitan quarters		
Scribe of metropolitan quarters	<i>amphodogrammateus</i>	Early second to mid-third century AD
AD 200/1:		
Council	<i>boule</i>	
Council president	<i>prytanis</i> or <i>proedros</i>	
Councilor	<i>bouleutes</i>	
<i>Village level</i>	<i>kome</i>	
Village mayor	<i>komogrammateus komarches</i>	Until mid-third century AD From mid-third century AD on
Village elders	<i>presbyteroi komes</i>	
Association of state farmers	<i>basilikoi</i> or <i>demosioi georgoi</i>	
<i>Fayum</i>		
Head of a <i>meris</i>	<i>strategos</i>	Initially, one for each <i>meris</i> ; after AD 137, the <i>merides</i> Themistos and Polemon were taken together
Royal scribe	<i>basilikos grammateus</i>	
Metropolitan and district level: see above		
Village level:		
Village mayor	<i>komogrammateus amphodokomogrammateus komarches</i>	Attested until AD 217 Until mid-third century AD From mid-third century AD on

^aThis office is also attested for lower levels.

population of the *chora* (Kruse 2002). Also involved in the *epikrisis* procedure seems to have been an Alexandrian official called the *hypomnematographos*, but the precise character of his sphere of competence remains obscure (Whitehorne 1987).

Besides the *idios logos*, the other important office of the financial administration of the province was the *dioiketes*, who already in the Ptolemaic Period had been a powerful official and the head of the civil administration of the whole country. In the Early Roman Period, however, the *dioiketai* were minor officials on the local level of the nome, and it was only in the reign of Emperor Hadrian that the office was restored as head of the financial administration of the whole *chora* (Hagedorn 1985). In contrast to the *idios logos*, the *dioiketes* was in charge of the regular state revenue, mainly from the rents due from the cultivation of state land and from taxes, customs duties, and so on. Another new office in the financial administration of the province was that of *procurator usiacus*, who functioned as head of the *ousiakos logos*, a specific branch of the provincial fisc created under the Flavian emperors that incorporated the former estates (*ousiai*) of the members of the Julio-Claudian dynasty and their freedmen, which had been confiscated after the civil war following the fall of Nero in AD 68 (Parássoglou 1978; Beutler 2009).

The “high priest (*archiereus*) of Alexandria and all Egypt” was another new procuratorial office introduced by the Romans. His main task, from what can be gathered from our documentation, was to control the administration of the Egyptian temples and their priests, who were in the Imperial Period subjected to strict supervision by the government and who suffered a reduction of their former privileges, as well as a confiscation of much of their landed property. In spite of his title, the *archiereus* obviously had more of an administrative role than a religious one, although recently it has been argued that he must also have had some responsibility for the religious worship of the emperor in the province; since, however, testimonies for an organized provincial imperial cult in Egypt are absent, this remains a controversial issue (Demougin 2007; Pfeiffer 2010b).

Among the minor procuratorial posts in the central administration must be noted the *procurator Neas Poleos*, who was responsible for the transport of the state grain from the *chora* to Alexandria, to be shipped to Rome and other areas of the empire via a special port in the Alexandrian quarter of Neapolis that contained large granaries.

8.4 The Central State Archives

Alexandria was also the home of the central state archives of the province, and it cannot be sufficiently emphasized that the archival branch on the central as well as the local level of the administration was thoroughly enhanced and reorganized by the Romans from the very beginning of their rule. By this time, there was established with the *Nanaion* a central record office in Alexandria, which was to receive the legal instruments drafted in the notary offices (*grapheia*) of the whole province. It took its name from the Semitic word *Nana*, referring to the Egyptian goddess Isis, and was probably connected with a temple of hers. The same purpose served the “Library of Hadrian” (*Hadriane bibliotheke*), which was created about AD 127 and was supposed to be superior to the already existing *Nanaion*. For both archives, the so-called *katalogeion* (“Catalogue”) functioned as a sort of a “clearing office” inasmuch as its officials had to carefully examine the documents that

were to be filed with them for manipulations, additions, or erasures. The *katalogeion* thus served as a safeguard for the connection between the local *grapheia* and the central archives. The *archidikastes* ("chief of justice"), who was also in charge of the Alexandrian law courts, functioned as head of the *katalogeion*. The functioning and interaction of the Alexandrian record offices is well illustrated by two edicts of the prefect Titus Flavius Titianus dating to AD 127 (P.Oxy. I 34 verso = M.Chr. 188). In Alexandria, there was also a special archive in which were deposited the official records of the administration (*demosioi logoi*), as well as the official journals of the single office holders (*hypomnematismoi*). Its name was probably "Library in the Patrika" (*he en Patrikois bibliotheke*) (Cockle 1984; Burkhalter 1990).

8.5 The Roman Administration of the *Chora*

Turning now to the administrative offices of the Egyptian *chora*, we have first to deal with the (three to four) *epistrategoi* (Thomas 1982). This office had its Ptolemaic predecessor, but while under the Ptolemies the *epistrategoi* had been influential military commanders and local governors in parts (or at times even the whole) of the Egyptian *chora*, in the Roman Period they were exclusively responsible for civil administrative matters. The number of the *epistrategiai* cannot always be fixed precisely. Before the end of Augustus' rule, there probably existed only three *epistrategiai* (i.e. Lower Egypt, the *Heptanomia* or Middle Egypt, and the *Thebais* or Upper Egypt). In the later second century AD, the *epistrategia* for Lower Egypt was subdivided into two separate districts, one comprising the eastern part of the Nile Delta with Pelusium, the other its central and western parts. This administrative division remained intact until the office of *epistrategos* disappeared around AD 300 in the course of the reforms under Emperor Diocletian. Like the holders of the offices of the central administration in Alexandria, the *epistrategoi* were also procurators of equestrian rank, and thus appointed by the emperor. Their position in the administrative chain of command is to a great extent still unclear. However, and notwithstanding the fact that they were somehow placed between the central and the local administration, it seems fairly certain that they did not constitute any sort of a regular middle administrative instance between the Alexandrian offices and those of the nome administration in the *chora*. This is mainly illustrated by the fact that the prefect and the heads of the other administrative departments in Alexandria corresponded directly with the nome *strategoi*, and not via the *epistrategoi*. Concerning their sphere of competence, the documents so far extant inform us that they assisted the prefect in the administration of justice, and also judged cases on their own, so it could be that at least concerning the judicial branch of government, the *epistrategoi* formed a sort of a "middle instance" between the courts of the prefect and the other Alexandrian offices and the nome *strategoi*. They were also involved in the appointment to liturgical offices.

We now leave the group of officials who were Romans of equestrian rank, appointed by the emperor and thus (at least in general) recruited from outside the province (although there were a few exceptions, first and foremost Tiberius Julius Alexander, *praefectus Aegypti* in AD 68–69, who originated from an influential Jewish family of Alexandria, became an apostate, and had an illustrious career as a close friend of the Flavian family).

By contrast, the *strategoi* (Hohlwein 1969; Dirscherl 2004; Kruse 2006), who stood at the head of the administration of the nomes of the Egyptian *chora*, were recruited from the indigenous Hellenized elite of the country. This was also the case with the other leading official of the nome, the *basilikos grammateus* (royal scribe). While in the first hundred years of Roman rule the holders of these offices seem to have been recruited mainly from the urban aristocracy of Alexandria, we see with the beginning of the second century AD (at the latest) more and more members of the urban elite of the nome *metropoleis* of the *chora* functioning as nome *strategos*. This is also due to the process of “municipalization” initiated by the Romans, to which we will turn later. The first known nome *strategos* originating from a nome *metropolis* is Apollonios, whose hometown was Hermopolis in Middle Egypt and who held office as *strategos* of the nome *Apollonopolites Heptakomias* in Upper Egypt between c. AD 113 and 120 (see Box 20.1). The large dossier of documents connected to him and his family contains many private letters written by family members, friends, and business agents, and provides illuminating information on the social, economic, and cultural background of a family of the local Hellenized municipal elite of Egypt and their level of education and literacy.

With the Roman takeover, the *strategos* ultimately lost its function as a military commander, which it had in principle kept until the later Ptolemaic Period, although its prerogatives in the civil administration had gained more and more importance. The nome *strategoi* were appointed by the prefect for a period of three years, as stated in a ruling in the edict of the prefect Tiberius Julius Alexander from AD 68 (I.Prose 57.34–35). Most probably, the same applies to the *basilikoi grammateis*. But this term of office could be prolonged or reiterated, since our documentation indicates that *strategoi* and royal scribes held their offices for longer than three years. In order to prevent an undue mingling of private interests and official duties, there existed a ruling that prohibited one from functioning as administrative official in the same district where one’s fiscal domicile (*idia*) was located. This can be inferred from a regulation in Section 70 of the *Gnomon of the Idios Logos* from the reign of Antoninus Pius (see earlier), where it is stated that public officials are not allowed to make financial transactions in the same district in which they hold office. It is unclear whether this regulation existed from the beginning of Roman rule.

Usually, the district of the *strategos* was a single nome. In the Arsinoite nome (Derda 2006), however – which was by far the biggest administrative district of the *chora*, and was divided in three *merides* (Herakleides-, Themistos-, and Polemon-*meris*) – a single *strategos* was responsible for each *meris*. In AD 137, Themistos- and Polemon-*meris* were united under one *strategia*, and finally, about the middle of the third century, a single *strategos* functioned for the whole nome.

Placed at the head of the nome’s administration, the *strategos*’ prerogatives concerned the jurisdictional, police, and financial matters of his district. He presided over a court to settle disputes pertaining to civil law, which were either brought before him directly or remitted to him by superior authorities who had been petitioned at first instance, such as the prefect himself. But the most important duty of the nome *strategos* was undoubtedly to ensure the unhampered flow of taxes and tributes – especially the grain tribute – to Alexandria. To this end, he had mainly to control and take record of the economical and human resources of his district and supervise the lower administrative officials in the villages and the nome *metropolis*. Among the diverse instruments developed to exercise

this control was the previously mentioned provincial census, in the course of which the nome *strategos*, the royal scribe, and village or metropolitan officials received the household declarations of the nome, which provided the administration with an overview of the tax-paying population. The records, which were compiled on the basis of these declarations, were kept up to date by means of ad hoc declarations of birth or death. The former were relevant in assessing the date when a male individual would come of age (according to Greek law, the 13th birthday) and thus become liable to the poll tax (*laographia*), the latter in recording the decrease in revenue due to the loss of a taxpayer. Declarations also had to be filed with the local authorities for material resources like camels and small domestic livestock (sheep and goats). Another group of declarations concerned land that had not been inundated by the Nile flood (*abrochia* declarations), which was important for the assessment of the amount of productive arable land available, and thus the amount of state grain that could be obtained from it. Ensuring the timely transport of the grain by ship to Alexandria was another main task of the *strategos*, in which he collaborated with private carriers (*naukleroi*) who submitted bids to the administration. The *strategos* also controlled the tax farmers and the liturgical tax collectors (*praktoreis*) who were responsible for the collection of numerous taxes and customs duties, which were paid by the population either in money or in kind.

Furthermore, the *strategos* was responsible for the appointment of the various liturgical offices in the administration of the *metropolis* and in the villages of the nome (*grammateis poleos*, *komogrammateis*, etc.; see Chapter 4). He was also responsible for the control of the administration of the Egyptian temples in his district – their inventory and property, and the correct behavior of their priests and other personnel. One of the instruments of this control was the yearly accounts of temple inventory and lists of priests and other personnel (*graphai hieron kai cheirismou*) that each temple had to submit to the *strategos* and the *basilikos grammateus* of the nome.

One can get an overview of the daily bureaucratic routine of a nome *strategos* through the official journal (*hypomnematismoi*) for AD 232 of the *strategos* of the Ombite nome and the island of Elephantine (W.Chr. 41). Most of his daily tasks consisted of paperwork, since the journal records regularly that “from daybreak the *strategos* stayed in his office building (*logisterion*) taking care of the relevant issues (*ta diapheronta*).” The designation of the office where the *strategos* resided as a *logisterion* points also to the fact that his main duties were connected to the fiscal accounting of state revenues, since this designation derives from the Greek word *logizomai*, meaning “to calculate.” Only apparently extraordinary events breaking this routine are described in more detail, as are the performances of religious rites on the occasions of New Year’s Day and the birthday of the emperor, which the *strategos* celebrated together with the commanders of the Roman troops stationed in his district. But the audit of the tax collectors (*praktoreis*) is also explicitly mentioned.

The most important assistant (or, rather, administrative colleague) of the nome *strategos* was the royal scribe (*basilikos grammateus*) of the nome (Kruse 2002). This official performed many administrative tasks together with the *strategos*, such as receiving the diverse declarations previously mentioned or making disbursements from public funds. His main duties lay in the field of fiscal accounting, compiling records of the diverse resources and assets of his district on the basis of the reports of village and *metropolis* officials and the

declarations submitted by the population. One can get an impression of the extent of such records compiled by the office of the *basilikos grammateus* for the whole nome from a register of arrears of certain taxes of the Mendesian nome dating to the reign of Emperor Commodus (P.Thmouis 1, AD 180–192). The royal scribe was also the regular deputy of the nome *strategos* in case the latter was temporarily prevented from performing his duties or if there was a vacancy after a *strategos* had left his office.

As in the Ptolemaic Period, the nome *strategos* (*strategos tou nomou*) was placed above the lower administrative officials in the nome *metropolis* and in the territory of the nome, which was subdivided into toparchies (headed by a *topogrammateus*) and village-districts (*komogrammateiai*), each administered by a *komogrammateus*. The nome *metropolis*, notwithstanding its designation as “polis” and its important function as an administrative and religious center, had until about AD 200/1 in principle the same legal status as a village (*kome*), and thus was subordinate to the officials of the nome and did not possess any local autonomy. It was administered by *grammateis poleos* (“scribes of the city”), *amphodarchai* (“heads of town quarters”), and *amphodogrammateis* (“scribes of town quarters,” first attested early second century AD), who like the *komogrammateis* of the villages had to keep records of fiscally relevant matters, such as population lists. With regard to the recording of the population, the *komogrammateus* and the *grammateis poleos* were assisted by a group of officials called *laographoi*. Apart from receiving the diverse declarations (*apographai*) and compiling the relevant records and registers, the primary administrative responsibility of the *komogrammateus* was the care of the state land located in his district, since this was the main source for the grain tribute to be delivered to Alexandria. This included the regular inspection of the arable land (*episkepsis ges*) with regard to its productivity and the transport of the state grain to the village granaries (*thesouroi*). In performing such duties, the *komogrammateus* was assisted by a board of village elders (*presbyteroi komes*) and the association of the state farmers of the village (*basilikoi* or *demosioi georgoi*). The various tasks of a village scribe in Roman times are well illustrated by the archive of Petaus, *komogrammateus* of the district of Ptolemais Hormou in the Arsinoite nome from AD 182 to 187 (P.Petaus).

In general, the officials on the level of the villages, but also the *grammateis poleos* in the *metropolis*, were liturgists and thus had to perform their office as a compulsory service to the state for a fixed period (usually three years), if they possessed the necessary minimum capital (Oertel 1917; Lewis 1997). This applies also to various other functions of the local administration, such as the *sitologoi*, who managed the granaries that received the state grain, and where private individuals could also have their own grain accounts. Also liturgists were the different types of guardsmen watching over the fields (*pediophylakes*, *magdolophylakes*, etc.) and, from the reign of Emperor Trajan (AD 98–117), the collectors of the various taxes levied either in money or in kind (*praktores argyrikon* and *praktores sitikon*), who gradually replaced the former tax farmers. In particular, the tax collectors had to regularly render account to the nome officials of their receipts; this applies also to the *sitologoi*, who had to file monthly reports on receipts and the disbursement of tax grain into and from the granaries they administered (e.g. for loans of seed corn to the state farmers).

The offices on the various levels of the local administration must have housed numerous subordinate staff members, in most cases designated as *grammateis* (“scribes”) and *boethoi* (“assistants”). These were professional scribes who generally worked there for their entire

lifetime and performed the daily routines of the administrative offices, such as the drafting of documents, the making of extracts from files, and the receiving of declarations, petitions, and so on. Some of them also had the right to sign as representatives of their superiors and could act as chief of staff of the administrative office to which they were attached. These *boethoi* and *grammateis* were an important factor in the bureaucratic continuity and often remarkable uniformity and diligence of the paperwork produced by the numerous offices on every level of the local administration over the centuries (Kruse 2012, 2016). Such office staff could even enable the smooth running of the administrative business when their superior was illiterate, as with the previously mentioned *komogrammateus* Petaus, who was unable to write Greek and only painstakingly learned to scrawl his signature, which was necessary to authorize documents. These documents, however, were very professionally drafted by the staff of Petaus' *komogrammateia*, which must have been quite numerous since the editors of the archive of Petaus distinguished at least 11 different hands in the dossier (P.Petaus). The (perhaps exceptional) case of Petaus also illustrates the importance of a professional office staff for the liturgical offices, whose holders were (usually) not professionals – although they may have gained some professional administrative knowledge after having performed several liturgies.

8.6 Archives and Record Offices in the *Chora*

Archives and record offices existed in the *chora* both in the *metropoleis* and in the villages. The former had a *bibliotheke demosion logon*, which was headed by *bibliophylakes* and their staff and received the records and files of the local administration (Cockle 1984; Burkhalter 1990). But the local officials were obliged to deposit the official records of their administration and their official journals in Alexandria, both in the Archive in the Patrika and with the *eklogistes*, who was responsible for a single nome and was attached to the central administration (see earlier). For this purpose, the records were entrusted to special couriers for the receipt and delivery of records to be sent to Alexandria (*hoi pros paralempsin kai katakomiden biblion pempomenon eis Alexandreian*). Apart from being deposited in the central archive, the records sent to the *eklogistes* in particular served as a means for the preparation of the regular audit of the local administration in the course of the prefect's annual *conventus* (Kruse 2016).

Around AD70, another archive, the private-property record office (*bibliotheke enkteseon*), was separated from the *bibliotheke demosion logon*. This archive mainly recorded legal transactions on landed property, and we are informed of its functioning through an edict of the prefect Marcus Mettius Rufus dating to AD 89 (P.Oxy. II 37, viii, ll. 27-43). It appears that the *bibliotheke enkteseon* was connected to the extension and evolvement of the liturgical system, which gradually involved nearly all of the social strata of the province's population. Since liturgists were liable for their nominations to certain offices to the extent that they could afford it, this may have prompted the government to establish a stricter control over the records of property and, in particular, the transfer of ownership, since any disposition on real estate had to be authorized by the *bibliotheke enkteseon* by means of a sort of clearance certificate (called an *epistalma*), which stated that the property in question was free of any legal liability such as mortgages. But the measure may well also

have aimed at providing a greater legal security for contracting parties in cases of transfer of ownership of landed property (Wolff 1978).

Another important institution in the *chora* was the *grapheia* (see Chapter 12), local notary bureaus located in each toparchy and in many of the larger villages (e.g. in Tebtynis in the Arsinoite nome, the functioning of which in the first century AD we are informed about through a great number of records; P.Mich. III). Here were drafted the private legal instruments, which were pasted together in chronological order to form long rolls of documents (*tomoi synkollesimoi*). In addition, summaries were made of the contracts drafted, which were collected in registers called *eiromena*. The superintendent of the *grapheion* had to deposit these and other records in the *bibliotheke demosion logon* of the nome and in the Alexandrian archives. The local *grapheia* in the Egyptian *chora* thus formed a vital element of the rebuilding of the archival branch of the provincial government by the Romans, which mainly aimed to centralize the registration of private legal transactions in Alexandria.

8.7 From Municipalization of the *Chora* to *Civitates*

In the long run, the administrative structure of the Egyptian *chora* evolved through the process of “municipalization” initiated by the Romans, which aimed at strengthening the administrative role of the nome capitals and their urban elite. A first stage was the establishing of municipal honorary offices (*archai*) in these towns (e.g. *exegetes*, *gymnasiarchos*, *kosmetes*, *agoranomos*) (Hagedorn 2007). Such offices are commonly attested in the *poleis* of the Greek East. Although in the course of time they developed a quasi liturgic character, they were in principle regarded as an honor, as illustrated by the fact that having formerly held such an office bore its own title and thus signified one’s social rank. Being first-hand responsible for municipal affairs (the *exegetes* for matters of guardianship, the *gymnasiarchos* for the management of the gymnasium, etc.), the holders and former holders of such offices, as the social elite of the nome *metropolis*, became more and more involved in its administration. The members of commissions were picked by the *strategos* from the group of former municipal office-holders for specific administrative tasks, such as overseeing the *epikrisis* procedure for enrollment in the privileged status groups (see earlier) or distributing seed corn to the state farmers. When in about AD 200/1 Emperor Septimius Severus granted not only Alexandria – which had lost its council either in the Late Ptolemaic Period or at the very beginning of Roman rule – but also the nome *metropoleis* the right to establish a city council (*boule*) (Bowman 1971), the ranks of the councilors were easily filled by members of the already existing municipal elite. Although the local autonomy of a Greek *polis* implied only a limited scope for independent action under the political rules of the Roman Principate, it is beyond doubt that having a city council still symbolized the legal status of a *polis* and marked a town’s civic identity, and thus the nome *metropoleis* were proud of having been promoted to this status. This can be seen by the creation of honorific titles for the towns, and by the setting up of agonistic games in the course of the third century. After being granted the privilege of town councils, the *boule*, under its president (the *prytanis*), assumed an increasing level of administrative responsibility in the nome administration (Bowman and Rathbone 1992; Jördens 1999). Thus, the commissions of members of the urban elite for certain

administrative tasks were now picked by the *boule* instead of the *strategos*, and by the early third century AD the *boule* had already become responsible for tax collection across the whole nome. Minutes of proceedings of the *boulai* of Oxyrhynchos and Herakleopolis preserved on papyrus illustrate the various tasks and affairs in which these local town councils were involved.

The increasing involvement of the *boule* in the nome's administration in the course of the third century AD gradually changed the appearance of the former rather strict centralized system of the administration of the *chora*, and stood at the beginning of a process whereby the nome *metropoleis* evolved in Late Antiquity into *civitates* with the former nome as their territory. Hence, the increased importance of the nome capital meant the shrinking importance of the nome, and it is not at all surprising that this had significant repercussions for the traditional offices of the nome administration, many of which (first and foremost the *strategos* and the royal scribe) had existed for more than five centuries. So, for example, the office of the royal scribe of the nome disappeared and was most probably replaced by the *dekaprotai*, a board of officials picked from the bouleutic class, who were introduced around AD 245 in the course of administrative reforms in the reign of Emperor Philippus Arabs (Kruse 2002). By this time, the offices of *komogrammateus* and *amphodogrammateus* had also disappeared, and with them the traditional Egyptian administration that considered the writing of the scribe as its central element and which went back to the earliest pharaonic times. These officers were replaced by *komarchs* for the villages and *phylarchs* for the cities. About the middle of the third century AD, various types of administrative documents disappeared, such as declarations of livestock, declarations of uninundated land, and census declarations. From this time on, the administration of the nome was to a great extent characterized by a close cooperation of the *strategos* with the *boule* in the *metropolis*, as illustrated by the correspondence of the *strategos* of the Panopolite nome in Upper Egypt with the *boule* of Panopolis in AD 298 (P.Panop. Beatty 1), concerning various fiscal matters.

8.8 Late Antique Egypt

In the course of the administrative and fiscal reforms of the emperor Diocletian at the end of the third/beginning of the fourth century AD, which were continued under the second tetrarchy and in the sole reign of Constantine, the character of the nome *strategia* again changed significantly. About AD 307, the nome *metropoleis* had become *civitates* and the nome as an independent administrative district ceased to exist and became the territory of the *civitas*, which was divided into several *pagi* headed by a *praepositus pagi*. Also, the former nome *strategia* was dissolved and changed into a municipal office (Kruse 2002). This reflects a fundamental change inasmuch as the nome *metropolis*, which for centuries had been subordinate to the nome *strategos*, had now become its superior, being the capital of a territory. Hence, the administrative duties of the former nome *strategos* were distributed among several municipal offices, such as the *curator civitatis* (*logistes*) for administrative matters of the town, the *exactor civitatis* for its fiscal administration, the *riparius* for the police, and the *defensor civitatis* for judicial matters. All of these officials were picked from the curial class of the former nome *metropolis* and were appointed upon nomination by the *boule*. The title of the *exactor* sometimes revived the memory of the

former nome *strategos* when he was designated as *strategos etoi exaktor* (“*strategos* or *exaktor*”), despite the fact that he was no longer a *strategos* but merely an *exaktor*. The result of these reforms was the alignment of the internal administration of Egypt with that of the other provinces of the empire – one may note also the now frequent use of Latin official titles – bringing to an end the process of “municipalization” that the Romans had initiated from the very beginning of their rule and gradually intensified since, mainly in order (together with the establishment of the liturgical system) to involve the elites of the Egyptian *chora* in the local administration.

The Diocletianic reforms, as is well known, also affected the higher levels of the administration, since Egypt was one of the objects of the new division of the provinces into smaller administrative units grouped into dioceses carried out across the whole empire (Lallemant 1964). Another central element of these reforms was the separation between the civilian and the military authorities of the new provinces, which were now governed by *praesides* for the civilian and *duces* for the military branches; more rarely, the former were in some cases also designated as *praefectus* or *corrector*. While the whole of Egypt until AD 298 was still governed by the *praefectus Aegypti* residing in Alexandria, in that year the Thebaid (Upper Egypt) was constituted as a separate province under a *praeses*, who however was subordinate to the prefect, with *procuratores* responsible for the Upper and Lower Thebaid. The splitting off of the Thebaid also reflects an awareness of the very old regional identities of Upper Egypt, which dated back into the earliest pharaonic times. Later in the fourth century AD, Lower Egypt was split into the provinces of *Aegyptus Iovia* and *Herculia* (Table 8.2), representing the Western and Eastern Delta, and in 322 the middle Egyptian region of *Heptanomia* was created as another separate province, *Aegyptus Mercuriana*. These divisions were obviously somehow based upon the older *epistrategiai*. In 341, the eastern part of the Delta and the *Heptanomia* were united into the province of *Augustamnica* (Palme 1998). The now three Egyptian provinces were first part of the diocese *Oriens* and then, around AD 381, formed an independent diocese. In AD 398, the former Oxyrhynchite nome was the nucleus of the province *Arcadia*, which was separated by splitting off the *Heptanomia* from *Augustamnica* (Keenan 1977). The civilian governors of these provinces were subordinate to the *praefectus Augustalis*, who also functioned as head of the diocese, having the rank of a *vicarius*. This is the situation reflected in the *Notitia Dignitatum* (a “list of offices” of the Roman Empire in Late Antiquity, which dates to about AD 400). In the fifth and sixth centuries, we see a departure from the separation of military and civilian authority, since there are examples of officials titled *dux Aegypti et praefectus Augustalis* who possessed both (Table 8.3). Another major administrative reform was carried out through edict XIII of Emperor Justinian in AD 539 (Demicheli 2000; Mitthof 2008). Each of the now renamed *Aegyptus I* and *II* provinces, as well as Upper and Lower Thebaid, were governed by a *dux et Augustalis* possessing military powers and a civilian *praeses* who was subordinate to the *dux*.

Since the local administration had to rely heavily on the curial class, the less prosperous members of this social group increasingly tried to escape their steadily rising fiscal burden. In the fifth and sixth centuries, the separation between more and more impoverished *curiales* and other members of this class who gradually accumulated landed property was manifest. This process was also favored by the transfer of the former public

Table 8.2 The provinces of Late Antique Egypt (after Palme 2007, fig. 12.1).

298–314/5	314/5–322	322–324	324–341	341–374-381	381–397	c. 398–500	before 353	c. 539–619	629–640
Aegyptus <i>praefectus</i>	Aegyptus Iovia <i>praeses</i>	Aegyptus Iovia <i>praeses</i>	Aegyptus <i>praefectus</i>	Aegyptus <i>praefectus</i>	Aegyptus <i>praeses</i>	Aegyptus <i>praeses</i>	Aegyptus <i>Augustalis</i>	Aegyptus I <i>dux & Augustalis</i> Aegyptus II <i>praeses</i>	Aegyptus <i>dux & Augustalis</i>
	Aegyptus Herculia <i>praeses</i>	Aegyptus Herculia <i>praeses</i>		Augustamnica <i>praeses</i>	Augustamnica <i>corrector</i>	Augustamnica <i>corrector</i>	Augustamnica I <i>corrector</i>	Augustamnica I <i>dux & Augustalis</i> Augustamnica II	Augustamnica <i>dux & Augustalis</i>
		Aegyptus Mercuriana <i>praeses</i>				Arcadia <i>praeses</i>	Augustamnica II <i>praeses</i> Arcadia <i>praeses</i>	<i>praeses</i> Arcadia <i>praeses</i>	Arcadia <i>dux & Augustalis</i> Thebais <i>dux & Augustalis</i>
Thebais <i>praeses</i>	Thebais <i>praeses</i>	Thebais <i>praeses</i>	Thebais <i>praeses</i>	Thebais <i>praeses</i>	Thebais <i>praeses</i>	Thebais <i>praeses</i>	Thebais Inferior <i>praeses</i> Thebais Superior <i>dux</i>	Thebais Inferior <i>praeses</i> Thebais Superior <i>dux & Augustalis</i>	

Table 8.3 The main officials in Late Antique Egypt (c. AD 306–400).

	<i>Terminology</i>	<i>Notes</i>
<i>Central/provincial level</i>		
Minister of finances	<i>rationalis rei summae (katholikos)</i>	
Minister of imperial possessions	<i>magister rei privatae</i>	
Military commander	<i>dux</i> , later also <i>dux et Augustalis</i>	See Table 8.2
Provincial governor	<i>praeses (hegemon)</i> , also <i>praefectus</i> or <i>corrector</i>	Alternatingly two, three, or more provinces; see Table 8.2
<i>Municipal level</i>		
Curator	<i>curator civitatis (logistes)</i>	
Head of justice	<i>defensor civitatis</i>	from AD 331 on
Head of fiscal administration	<i>exactor (strategos etoi exaktor)</i>	
Head of police	<i>riparius</i>	
Delegated judge	<i>syndikos/ekdikos</i>	Until mid-fourth century
Council	<i>boule</i>	
Council president	<i>prytanis/proedros</i>	
Councilor	<i>propoliteumenos</i>	
Tax collector ^a	<i>apaitetes</i>	
Tax collectors	<i>apodektes/hypodektes</i> <i>epimeletes</i> <i>diadotes</i>	Until/from mid-fourth century
<i>District level</i>		
District head	<i>praepositus pagi</i> , later <i>pagarches/pagarchos</i>	
<i>Village level</i>		
Village mayor	<i>komarches</i>	
Village elders	<i>presbyteroi</i>	
Tax collector	<i>sitologos</i>	

^a This office is also attested on the village level.

land into private ownership. Rich *curiales* often functioned as *pagarchai* (or *pagarchoi*, who since the mid-fifth century had succeeded the former *praepositi pagi* and *exactores*), with responsibility for the collection of taxes in their district (Mazza 1995). The influential and powerful position of the *pagarchai* is illustrated by the papers of the notary Dioskoros, who functioned also as a village official in Aphroditos, which he represented in the conflict with the pagarch over the privilege of collecting (and delivering to the fisc) their own taxes (*autopragia*; see Chapter 25).

The family, household, and landed property of the powerful landlords were now styled as *oikos*, and to the biggest *oikoi* of the Egyptian countryside were now also entrusted

administrative duties in the regions where they resided, such as the collection of taxes (Gascou 1985); this reflects both the crisis and the final failure of the curial system. The traditional functions and titles of the municipal offices whose holders were recruited from the curial class disappeared and were replaced by a rather undefinable group merely designated as *proteuontes* (“men of first rank”), who now stood at the head of the *civitates*.

Another socially very influential source of authority evolved through the Christian Church, represented by its bishops and the monasteries, which were both fiscally privileged and accumulated much landed property (Wipszycka 1972, 2009; Schmelz 2002). Bishops, priests, and monks were often asked for help by the population when it felt oppressed by the administrative officials, and they presided in settling disputes in the so-called *dialysis* procedure (a sort of arbitration between conflicting parties), which became increasingly important in Late Antiquity as an alternative to the formal judicial procedure (Gagos and van Minnen 1994).

The important changes in the composition and structure of the local elite with the evolution of the powerful *oikoi* finally culminated in the promotion of such families to the highest ranks of the imperial aristocracy of the Eastern Roman Empire and the Senate of Constantinople, as illustrated by the family of the Flavii Apiones (Azzarello 2012).

FURTHER READING

Concerning the administration of Roman and Byzantine Egypt, non-English literature can hardly be avoided. For an excellent general account on the equestrian administrators of Egypt, see Eich (2007). For the prefect of Egypt and his interaction with the other offices of the central administration and with the administration of the *chora*, the most thorough analysis is Jördens (2009), to which should be added Foti Talamanca (1974) and Haensch (1997) on the *conventus* of the prefect. On the most important other offices of the central administration, see Kuspizewski (1953/54) on the *iuridicus*, Swarney (1970) on the *idios logos*, Hagedorn (1985) on the *dioiketes*, and Demougin (2007) and Pfeiffer (2010b) on the *archiereus*; for the *hypomnematographos*, see Whitehorne (1987). On the *procurator usiacus* and the *ousiakos logos*, see Parássoglou (1978) and Beutler (2009). For the office of the *epistrategos* in the Roman Period, the best reference is still Thomas (1982). For the lower levels of the administration, in particular the nome administration, the reader may still refer to Hohlwein (1969) on the nome *strategos*, since Dirscherl (2004) is highly problematic (see Kruse 2006); however, most of the issues of nome administration are also dealt with by Kruse (2002) (on the office of the royal scribe) and Kruse (2016). For the administration of the Arsinoite nome (Fayum) in particular, see Derda (2006). For the various liturgical offices, see Oertel (1917) and Lewis (1997). The emergence of municipal offices in the nome *metropoleis* is discussed by Hagedorn (2007). For the introduction of the *boulai* in the nome *metropoleis*, see Bowman (1971), and for the involvement of the towns in the administration in general, see Bowman and Rathbone (1992) and Jördens (1999). The various archives and record offices are dealt with by Cockle (1984), Burkhalter (1990), and Kruse (2014) (together with a selection of relevant texts translated into English). On the *bibliotheke enkteseon*, see Wolff (1978), and on the archive of the prefect, see Haensch (1992). The administrative changes and reforms in

Late Antiquity are discussed in Lallemand (1964) (for the period between the reforms of Diocletian and the creation of the Egyptian diocese); on the administration of Arcadia, see Keenan (1977), and on that of Augustamnica, Palme (1998); for the provincial administration established by Justinian in his edict XIII, one should refer to Demicheli (2000) and Mitthof (2008). On the pagarch, see Mazza (1995). The changes in elite structure in Byzantine Egypt are treated by Laniado (2002), and the administrative and fiscal role of the great *oikoi* by Gascou (1985); on that of the Flavii Apiones in particular, see also Azzarello (2012). On the Christian churches and monasteries and their economic resources, see Wipszycka (1972, 2009), and on church officials, see Schmelz (2002). On the *dialysis* procedure, see Gagos and van Minnen (1994).

CHAPTER NINE

Policymakers in a Changing World

Bernard Legras

The conquest of the Nile Valley and the oases by Alexander the Great's army, then by Octavian, opens a new period of Egyptian history. The country comes under foreign domination for a long period of time, and massive immigration transforms it into a multicultural area. Greek and, later, Roman ways of thinking meet 1000-year old Egyptian traditions. The organization of the Ptolemaic kingdom and of the Roman province of Egypt is structured into a model where the power of the state, its counselors and its administration, the Egyptian sacerdotal power, and the three (later four) Greek cities interact. However, the borders between their authorities are blurred, and therefore the balance of power dialectics develops in a complex way. Neither the Ptolemies nor the Roman emperors are oriental despots. They must confront opposing forces and establish a dialogue with their subjects.

After recalling the major axes of these power plays, we shall concentrate on the education of the royal children, their intellectual retinue, the role of the royal counselors, and finally that of people in the entourage of the Roman emperors who had strong ties with Egypt.

9.1 The Complex World of Policymakers

The idea that the Ptolemaic administration and the Egyptian temples form as a matter of principle two separate and hostile universes should be revised (Clarysse 1999, pp. 54–58). The Ptolemies, who claim to be Greek kings (*basileis*) and pharaohs, participate in this double world. The Ptolemaic pharaoh, who is “Horus” and “son of Re,” ensures the contact between the divine and the human world. The priests are his assistants in accomplishing acts of worship, for he cannot do them all himself. One must abandon the idea

that the history of the kingdom is that of a slow weakening of the kings' "secular" power in favor of the priests' "clerical" power. The links between state and clergy ("Staat/Tempel") should rather be seen from the perspective of a collaboration, which lasted for the whole Ptolemaic Era. The trilingual decrees of the sacerdotal synods play *mutatis mutandis* the same role as the decrees of the Greek cities in affirming the decisions of the Egyptian clergy (Legras 2012). The Memphite high priests play a central role in this constructive dialogue. Tensions with the clergy in Upper Egypt indeed exist, but they remain essentially local (Veisse 2004).

Of the three Greek cities, only Alexandria plays a major political role; Naucratis experienced a slow decline, while Ptolemais played a major role only in Upper Egypt. The Ptolemies feared the megalopolis of Alexandria, a city of 400 000 inhabitants, whose population weighed on the political destiny of the kingdom. The city paid the price of it more than once. Ptolemy VIII, supported by the army and the Egyptians, took revenge against the population of the capital, which had supported his rival Cleopatra II. He eliminated part of the Alexandrian youth, drove out most of the intellectuals from the Mouseion, dissolved all educational, sporting, religious, and professional associations that might be centers of contestation and opposition, and threatened with a pogrom the Jews, who were eventually saved by an amnesty. Finally, as the increasing power of queens was a major phenomenon in Ptolemaic Egypt, one must not forget their impact on policymaking.

After the Roman conquest, Augustus and his successors did not become *basileis*, but did preserve some pharaonic attributes. Roman rule limited the power of the Egyptian clergy by confiscating from 20/19 BC onward part of the land belonging to the temples ("sacred land," Monson 2012b) and by strictly controlling accession to the priesthood. The *divide et impera* principle resulted in the restructuring of legal statutes of the population (Bussi 2008; see Chapter 18). The Greeks (*Hellenes*), for instance, no longer formed a kind of homogeneous legal group, since only those of the *chora* living in the nome capitals (*metropoleis*), having property, and enjoying a Greek education in the gymnasium paid the poll tax (*capitatio*) at a reduced rate; membership of this class (*ordo*) of the metropolitans was hereditary and strictly controlled. The citizens of the three (later four) Greek *poleis*, including Alexandria, benefitted from tax exemption (*ateleia*). But, for fear of an Alexandrian revolt, Augustus did not allow the city to reintroduce its city council (*boule*), abolished in the Late Ptolemaic Period and a major source of political disputes. The only major revolts that the Romans confronted were that of the Jews in AD 115–117, which was crushed by Trajan's troops (Mélèze Modzejewski 2011; see Chapter 20), and that of the *Boukoloi* or "cattlemen," who terrorized areas of the Delta c. AD 172 (Alston 1999). The violence of the Roman state experienced another climax between December 215 and April 216, with the terrible repression of the Alexandrians, who had rioted during the emperor's visit; this carnage was probably not the result of a moment of madness of Caracalla, but may have had a legal basis (Rodriguez 2012).

9.2 The Education of the Royal Family

The Ptolemies received an erudite education in the setting of the Alexandrian Mouseion, completed by the observation of court mores and of interior and international political life, by the responsibilities assumed before reigning, and, for some, by the association with

power as co-regent. Their linguistic education was exclusively turned toward Greek culture. With the exception of Cleopatra VII, the Ptolemies did not speak the native language. They practiced the common Greek (*koine*) of the Hellenistic Era and the Macedonian dialect, at least in the first generations. Ptolemy IV addressed his Egyptian troops before the battle of Raphia in 217 BC through an interpreter. As bilinguals were present at court and in the central administration of Alexandria, the royal chancellery was able to promulgate edicts that were bilingual (Greek and Demotic, Lewis 1993) and to support the clergy in publishing trilingual priestly decrees (e.g. the Rosetta Decree: Greek, Demotic, and Hieroglyphic). Some of these bilinguals belonged to the cultivated Egyptian class of priests.

Their ignorance of Egyptian should not be conceived as a sign of contempt on the part of the Ptolemies. In Antiquity, language did not have the importance we give it today. The librarian of the Eratosthenes Museum in Cyrene affirmed that one must not share humanity between Greeks and barbarians, but according to vice and virtue (Strabo 1.4.9). Cleopatra VII is said to have expressed herself – according to Plutarch (*Antonius* 27) – in Egyptian, in Ethiopian, in the language of the Troglodytes, in Hebrew, in Arabic, in Aramaic, in Parthian; a list to which one should certainly add Latin. However, the evidence of this gift of languages remains unique. The hypothesis that her mother may have been an Egyptian from the family of the great Memphis priests, and not Cleopatra Tryphaena, would explain only the acquisition of Demotic Egyptian (Huss 1990).

The excellency of their teachers and their access to books from the Mouseion Library offered the Ptolemaic princes and princesses the possibility of acquiring a vast knowledge in all areas. The intellectuals of the Mouseion, coming from all over the Hellenistic oecumene, put their literary talent to the service of Ptolemaic propaganda, encouraged the intellectual ambitions of the royal family, and provided first-class education to the royal children. Court poets like Theocritus and Callimachus sang the praises of the dynasty. The Ptolemies followed the model instituted by the Macedonian court of Pella, which offered the best masters to the children of the royal dynasty (e.g. Aristotle as private tutor of the young Alexander). Ptolemy I, a historian-king, established the poet Philotas of Cos as private tutor of the future Ptolemy II. He was, according to the *Suda*, succeeded by his pupil, Zenodotus of Ephesus, “an epic poet and grammarian ... The author of the first critical edition of the Homeric poems was in charge of Alexandria’s libraries and was the private tutor of the royal children.” The sources are silent regarding the program given by these private tutors. At the most, one can assume that they intervened after the introduction to reading and writing, which must have been the job of a less prestigious master (*grammatistes*) appointed for this primary level. The masters of second- and especially third-grade education (the *grammatikos* and the *rhetor*) in fact enjoyed a much higher status (Criboire 2001, pp. 53–65). The encyclopedic vocation of the Alexandrian Mouseion offered the Ptolemies access to the whole literary and scientific knowledge of the epoch. The Mouseion Library, whose books were “royal” – in other words, they belonged to the king – was a “closed library.” Access to it was severely controlled: only the intellectuals of the Mouseion and the members of the royal family could benefit from the 490 000 volumes in its collection in the era of Callimachus (the high number of volumes in the Alexandrian Library is doubted, see Bagnall 2002). The creation of the library entailed a cultural and political challenge that Demetrius of Phalerum elucidates “by advising King Ptolemy to acquire and to read these books about royalty and government:

‘for, what friends do not dare to advise kings, is written in books’” (Plutarch, *Regum et imperatorum apophthegmata* 189b). These works allowed the Greek kings of Egypt to better understand and know the peoples with very different origins and traditions who populated the kingdom, as well as the peoples and countries with which they were in contact. Integral or summarized translation of non-Greek works – the “barbarian wisdoms” – was one of the objectives of librarians and kings. The translation of the Torah, the Septuagint or the Bible of Alexandria, partly answered the cultural needs of a Hellenized Jewish community, while the recognition of the sacred text as a law accessible to the Jews of Egypt implied that it was also accessible to administration and royal justice (Mélèze Modrzejewski 1997b, pp. 141–147; see Chapter 31).

The Ptolemies, then the Romans, socially favored not only the Mouseion intellectuals, but also schoolteachers and sports trainers (*paidotribai*). The members of the Mouseion benefited in Greek and Roman Egypt from the *sitesis* – the right to be fed for free by the state – and from tax exemption (*ateleia*). During the Ptolemaic era, certain professions were exempted from the salt tax (*halike*), among them Greek schoolteachers (*didaskaloi*), “Egyptian teachers” (*Aigyptioi didaskaloi*; probably teachers of Greek in Egyptian schools), sports trainers, the artists of Dionysus, and the victors at the Alexandrian games. In Roman Egypt, these categories no longer benefited from such tax privileges (Clarysse and Thompson 2006, 2, pp. 88–89, 127–129), but Greek education (*paideia*) was still taken into account to define the “orders” that had tax privileges in the *chora*: the “people of the gymnasium” benefited from the same privileges as the order of the metropolitans of which they were part (see Chapter 18).

9.3 Greek or Egyptian Advisers?

Most advisers of the Ptolemies were Greeks, but we know at least 14 Egyptian experts working with the kings, from Ptolemy I to Cleopatra VII. The most famous of them is Manetho of Sebennytos, who wrote, probably under Ptolemy II, a “History of Egypt” (*Aigyptiaca*) in Greek (Legras 2002; see Chapter 31). Cleomenes of Naucratis played an important role at the moment of the Greco-Macedonian conquest, probably by designating to Alexander the site of the future Alexandria (for Cleomenes, see also Chapters 3, 10, and 14). Demetrius of Phalerum is the most emblematic Greek adviser. His role in the court of Ptolemy I is difficult to outline with precision. From his arrival as an exile in 297/6 BC, he became the “first of Ptolemy’s friends” (Plutarch, *De exilio* 7.601.f). He seems to have contributed to constructing the Ptolemaic state in three areas. First was the legislative area, for according to Aelian (*Varia Historia* 3.17), “in Egypt also, when he was at Ptolemy’s, he presided over the establishment of the laws.” But the laws established with his aid are not known. The second area was that of financial administration, with the creation of the *dioiketes*, the “minister of finances” – continuing a Late Period office (see Chapter 7), but undoubtedly also inspired by Athenian institutions, in which the magistrates charged with finance bore the same title (*ho epi tei dioikesei*, see Bogaert 1994a, p. 40). Finally, the third area was the idea of the Alexandrian Mouseion, which finds its most obvious model in the Lyceum, Aristotle’s peripatetic school in Athens, where Demetrius reportedly studied. The transfer from Athens to Alexandria of the idea of a

universalist research center revolving around a library is thus expressed by Strabo (13.1.54): “Aristotle is the first to our knowledge, to have gathered a collection of books and to have taught the Egyptian kings the way to organize a library.” Demetrius became disgraced at the accession of Ptolemy II in 283/2 BC, because he had advised Ptolemy I to nominate his eldest son Ceraunus to the succession: “If you give it to another, he repeated to him, you will end up finding yourself with nothing.” He was placed under house arrest in a village of the Delta and died some years later from the bite of an asp. The hypothesis of a political assassination fomented by Ptolemy II is plausible (Canfora 1990, p. 19).

9.4 The Impact of Royal Advisers

The influence of the advisers is sometimes difficult to measure. But the king is responsible before history for the decisions taken, as expressed by Polybius (4.24) regarding the deliberative process under Philip V of Macedonia, who showed remarkable political intelligence, despite being only 17 years old in 221–220 BC:

The king spoke last – if one really must admit that the opinion he expressed then was indeed his own, for it is hardly probable that a seventeen-year-old adolescent was capable of solving such difficult questions. But we, who write history, are indeed obliged to attribute to the supreme power holder the decisions to which these deliberations led. All the same that must not prevent readers from wondering if the arguments presented and the decisions made were not in all probability inspired by people in the royal entourage and in particular the habitual confidants of the sovereign.

The royal council (Greek *synedrion*, Latin *consilium*) of Alexandria deliberated in front of the king. The importance of this power body becomes apparent on several occasions. Its role at the beginning of the reign of the boy Ptolemy V is known thanks to Polybius (15.25–26), who shows the rivalry for the control of the council. The *strategos* Tlepolemus, who aspired to be part of it, was removed by Agathocles. The latter populated the council with men who were totally devoted to him, after the death of his accomplice Sosibius, who was the political head of this clique. In 203 BC, Agathocles and his sister Agathoclea were assassinated in an Alexandrian riot fomented by Tlepolemus, who took Agathocles’ place as regent. It is still debated whether Agathoclea, with whom Agathocles led his political combat of influence, was present on the council. The council also has judicial functions. Scopas, an Aetolian in the service of Ptolemy V, was, along with his friends, condemned to death by the council acting as a tribunal, where the regent Aristomenes, the successor of Tlepolemus, and Polycrates, the governor of Cyprus, sat as his accusers. Polybius (18.54) reports that some (particularly Aetolian) ambassadors were present at the session. Following the indictments, Scopas tried to defend himself, but “no one listened to him and he was immediately led to prison along with his friends. When night fell, Aristomenes had him killed by poison with his family members and his friends.”

A major event – the meeting of the council that decided the death of Pompey under the reign of Ptolemy XIII, still a minor – offers the most precise source material for the proceedings. The decision to assassinate Pompey on his arrival on the Egyptian shores in

July 48 BC was in fact the object of a debate reported by numerous authors (cf. Heinen 1966, pp. 43–45, 64–65; Legras 1999, pp. 126–127). Their accounts offer divergent data on the councilors playing the main roles in the debates. Lucan (*Pharsalia* 8.470–537) heaps scorn on the members of this council, whom he calls the “monsters of the palace.” He introduces two councilors, Acoreus and Pothinus. The Memphite priest Acoreus, “made mild by old age and held back more by the decline of age,” demanded that the council respect its loyalty toward Pompey and honor the link forged with his father, Ptolemy XII Auletes, who in 59 BC at the instigation of Caesar and Pompey had received from the Roman Senate the title of “friend and ally of the Roman people.” The eunuch Pothinus, who was at the same time head of the regency council and in charge of the treasury, made a long speech (transcribed by Lucan in 52 Latin verses) in which he pleaded for death. He addressed the king while begging refusal to aid a vanquished general who could attract to Egypt an angry response from the victor, Caesar: “Right and justice, O Ptolemy, often make culprits; fidelity so much vaunted attracts chastisement when it is attached to those whom fortune overwhelms. Take the side of the fates and the gods, honor the fortunate, but shun the wretched.” This speech convinced all of the members of the council, but Lucan stresses that the decision was under the jurisdiction of the king alone. Pothinus cleverly noted that the king’s age, 13 years, in no way prevented him from making one: “it is not necessary that Magnus (Pompey) has with impunity scorned your age, he who believes you incapable of removing from our shores even those conquered” (*Pharsalia* 8.486–498). Plutarch (*Pompeius* 77) adds that the initiative of this meeting of the “most powerful” men of the kingdom came from the eunuch Pothinus. Its composition in fact was due to Pothinus, who was “in charge of all the business” and had the upper hand in the choice of powerful men at court. His choice fell on the men “attached to the bedroom and to the education of the king.” Plutarch does not mention Acoreus, but the three principal councilors: Pothinus, the rhetorician Theodotus of Chios who was the king’s private tutor, and the general Achilles. According to Plutarch, three opinions were expressed: refusal to welcome Pompey, the offer of asylum, and assassination. He names only the defender of the third option, which won the day, Theodotus. The first had the disadvantage of alienating Pompey without satisfying Caesar, since Pompey was pursuing his flight; the second of making an enemy of Caesar and making Pompey master of the country. Plutarch explains Theodotus’ success by his oratory talent, while terminating the résumé of this intervention with a quote, which was probably its final sentence: “A cadaver does not die.” Achilles was charged with the assassination, which was executed on July 25, 48 BC. Caesar disembarked two days later for Alexandria. The arguments of the councilors transmitted by Lucan and Plutarch are all based on the national interest. The differences of opinion between councilors can also express rivalry between the members of a group constituting a camarilla. These discussions do not interest only historians. The French tragedian Corneille, in *La Mort de Pompée* (1643), followed Lucan’s account.

9.5 Egypt’s Role in Controlling Power in Rome

The Augustan status of Egypt defined relationships between the conqueror and the conquered (Capponi 2005). Egypt was constituted as an imperial province with a singular character. The *princeps* received exclusive authority over the country, in the name of the

Roman people. He was represented in Alexandria by a knight, the prefect of Egypt, who was granted a special *imperium* as if he were a proconsul. Fundamentally, Augustan politics aimed at isolating the province and preventing secession. The cornerstone of the peculiar statute was a triple operation against the Senate: Roman senators were forbidden to visit Egypt, except with the explicit authorization of the *princeps*; Romans from Egypt could not become senators in Rome; and Alexandria was denied a city council (*boule*). Cassius Dio (51.17) explains Augustus' motivations: for the first two prohibitions, the demographic weight of the country, "the easy and light nature of their morals; the central role of Egyptian wheat for supplying to Rome"; for the third, the "revolutionary temperament" of the Alexandrians. This triple ban was at the heart of the Roman-Alexandrian controversy until Septimius Severus re-established the Alexandrian *boule* c. AD 200/1. The Alexandrians would repeatedly demand the re-establishment of their council (cf. P. Lond. VI 1912 = CPJ II 153.66–72, the letter from Claudius to the Alexandrians on November 10, AD 41, and PSI X 1160 = H. Musurillo, *Acts of the Pagan Martyrs* I = CPJ II 150, known as "the boule papyrus").

Egypt had a major impact on religion in Rome with the spread of the cults of Isis and Sarapis, as well as on architectural creations, resulting in a veritable Egyptomania. In the domain of humanities, we will take, as examples, the philosophical and political influences of individuals linked to Egypt: the Alexandrian Areius Didymus, one of Octavius' teachers; the Egyptian Chairemon, one of the private tutors of Nero; the Roman prefect Tiberius Julius Alexander, in place during the crisis of the years AD 68–69; and the Roman Gaius Cornelius Gallus, the first prefect of Egypt. The Stoic Areius, a friend of Maecenas, was the private Greek tutor of the young Octavius. Their friendship is one of the reasons why Augustus accorded pardon to Alexandria in the Greek speech he delivered on the occasion of his triumphal entry into the city in August 30 BC (Cassius Dio 51.16). His influence endured after the years of formation. Areius is the author of the famous statement that condemned to death Ptolemy Caesarion, the so-called son of Caesar and Cleopatra VII: "It is not a good thing to have several Caesars." Chairemon is at the same time an Egyptian "sacred priest" (*hierogrammateus*) and a Stoic philosopher (Van Der Horst 1984). This intellectual, well versed in multiple subjects, may have been a librarian of the Alexandrian Mouseion. It is striking that his pupil, the future emperor Nero, implemented a notoriously Egyptophile policy (cf. Suetonius and Tacitus). Men who had come from Egypt enjoyed great confidence at Nero's court, including Gaius Norbanus Ptolemaeus, who was *iuridicus* and *idios logos* (in charge of the imperial treasury in Egypt) in AD 63, and who owned an estate in at least the Hermopolite nome (Cizek 1982, p. 122). Nero's correspondence with the Greek elites of Fayum (SB XII 11012) shows that his interest was turned toward the dual Egyptian and Greek dimension of the province. In AD 68, shortly before his death, he thought of retiring to Egypt, but he never had the time to go through with this project (Plutarch, *Galba* 2). However, other influences came into play, in particular that of the philosopher Seneca, his counselor, who wrote a work on Egypt, today lost. The maneuvers of the prefect Tiberius Julius Alexander – son of Alexander, who was arabarch (in charge of customs dues) in Egypt's Eastern Desert, and nephew of the philosopher Philo (Rathbone 1983) – bring further proof of Egypt's role in controlling power in Rome. In fact, the ambitious prefect of Egypt secretly made contact with Galba to support the rebellion against Nero. This is why, on July 6, AD 68, less than a month after Nero's death, and before being confirmed by the new emperor, he promulgated an

edict acknowledging Galba's accession to the throne and announcing measures to put an end to abuses in the administration (Chalon 1964).

Already, from the very start of the Principate, men appointed by the *princeps* could become a menace to the central government, as shown by the case of Gaius Cornelius Gallus, who was tied to Augustus by *amicitia*. Born around AD 69/70, perhaps in Gallia Narbonensis, in Fréjus, but more probably in Gallia Cisalpina, in Voghera (60 km from Milan), this former partisan of Julius Caesar was an officer of valor, who had taken part in the battle of Actium on Octavian's side, and who resisted the assault of Marc Antony at Paraitonion. He was also a cultivated man, a poet, and a friend of Virgil – who dedicated to Gallus, in 37 BC, his tenth Bucolic. He enjoyed the full confidence of Octavian during the “negotiations” with Cleopatra after the taking of Alexandria. An obelisk in Alexandria erected by Gallus between August 1, 30 and April 15, 29 BC is today situated at the center of St. Peter's Square in the Vatican. The Latin inscription mentions the construction of a forum in Alexandria, probably in front of the Caesareum (Alföldi 1990). The new lord of the country chose him, in 30 BC, as the first prefect of the new imperial province. But three or four years later, Gallus fell into disgrace. In search of glory, he had engraved on the island of Philae, downstream from the first cataract, a trilingual dedication (Hieroglyphic, Latin, and Greek) vaunting his exploits (Hoffmann et al. 2009), but this arouses the jealousy and anxiety of Octavian, by now Augustus. In the Hieroglyphic text, Gallus asserted himself as the heir to the royal pharaonic ideology (“Königsideologie”). He is also represented as a horseman in combat, which may have been misunderstood as an imitation of Alexander (see Chapter 34). According to Cassius Dio, he had made insolent remarks upon their meeting, erected his own statues all over Egypt, and recorded his accomplishments on the pyramids. A papyrus from Oxyrhynchos (P.Oxy. XXXVII 2820) reports his desire to strike his own coins, thus breaking the bond of subjection with the *princeps* and Rome. While preparing the secession of Egypt, either to establish his own government or to attempt a usurpation against Augustus afterwards, Gallus broke the bond of friendship (*amicitia*) that tied them. The *princeps* dismissed him from his office as prefect and forbade him to stay in the imperial provinces. He was probably also excluded from the equestrian order. A court case was later brought against him for a “crime against majesty” (*crimen maiestatis*) before the Senate, condemning him to exile and to confiscation of his assets. Gallus, deprived of his rank, of his friendship with the *princeps*, and of his fortune, committed suicide with his sword before the execution of the sentences. According to Suetonius (*Divus Augustus* 66.2), Augustus wept over his death and complained of his status of *princeps*, “he alone being unable to do as he wished to limit the effects of his anger against his friends.”

FURTHER READING

The policymakers of the Ptolemaic Period are discussed in Legras (2002, 2012). For the impact of individuals from Egypt and their followers on theological and ecclesiastical policies in the Byzantine world, see Chapter 29.

CHAPTER TEN

Taxation and Fiscal Reforms

Andrew Monson

The Egyptian documents provide a unique opportunity for historians to understand the tax system, which was one of the most basic and vital of all state institutions. Its importance is underscored by the large percentage of fiscal records of one type or another (receipts, accounts, land registers, tax lists, official correspondence, decrees, etc.) that survive among the papyri and ostraca. This makes Egypt a vital case for comparative studies of premodern taxation (Klinkott et al. 2007; Monson and Scheidel 2015). On the other hand, it comes as no surprise that there has not yet been any attempt to write a single overview of Egyptian fiscal history in the Ptolemaic, Roman, and Byzantine Periods (c. 332 BC to AD 642). New texts bearing on the tax system are being edited every year, faster than the few specialists in the field are able to interpret and contextualize them systematically.

For the Ptolemaic Period, Rostovtzeff's early work (1910) and his extensive treatment of Egypt in his *Social and Economic History of the Hellenistic World* (1941), as well as Préaux's (1939) *L'économie royale des Lagides*, laid the foundations for understanding royal economic policy. Much has changed since then, even in the past two decades, thanks in part to the combined analysis of Greek and Demotic Egyptian sources (Vandorpe 2000; Muhs 2005a; Clarysse and Thompson 2006; Huss 2011). The field is still in flux, so it is premature to offer definitive conclusions. Much the same can be said for the subsequent period, where Wallace's (1938a) *Taxation in Roman Egypt* has remained the standard reference work (Heinen 1991b; Jördens 2012a), although now supplemented by excellent studies of certain officials who were involved in taxation (e.g. Palme 1989; Kruse 2002; Reiter 2004; Jördens 2009). For the Byzantine Period, Johnson and West's (1949) long chapter on taxation in *Byzantine Egypt: Economic Studies* is still valuable, but recent work has led to considerable revision of our views about taxation in this period

(Gascou 1985; Mitthof 2001, pp. 83–187; Zuckerman 2004). Perhaps the greatest survivor is Wilcken's *Griechische Ostraka* (1899), whose study of taxes from the Ptolemaic to the Roman Period has not yet been replaced for certain topics.

It is perhaps no coincidence that the fundamental works devoted to taxation date to the middle of the twentieth century. By then, there was a substantial amount of papyrological evidence available. In the movements of postcolonialism and cultural history that followed, historians' interests moved from fiscal institutions toward issues such as ethnicity, social relations, and religion in the multicultural society of Greco-Roman Egypt – although political economy is coming back into the spotlight. At the same time, the study of the Ptolemaic, Roman, and Byzantine Periods has become more specialized, as scholars have stressed major institutional ruptures, first with the Roman conquest, and later with the reforms of Diocletian. Such transitions are important, but can only be understood through broad diachronic studies.

10.1 Ptolemaic Egypt

Some of the main debates in Hellenistic history impinge directly or indirectly on fiscal history. Rostovtzeff's (1910, 1929, 1941) views have been profoundly influential. He sometimes saw Egypt through the lens of Soviet central planning, as an example of a command economy (Rowlandson 2003). Important pieces of this model have been undermined by recent research, including the supposed absence of private property, the precarious status of royal cultivators, and the centralized control of economic production. Yet, one should not underestimate Rostovtzeff's achievement or the complexity of the Ptolemaic royal administration. Scholars such as Crawford (1978), Samuel (1989), and Bingen (2007a) have stressed the limits of central control and the free reign that such weakness gave local officials and tax farmers to profit. However, an important new study of the fiscal administration by Armoni (2012) reminds us that the Ptolemies possessed sophisticated mechanisms to regulate their agents and prevent abuses.

Ptolemy obtained Egypt in the distribution of satrapies after Alexander's death in 323 BC and quickly killed its former satrap, Cleomenes of Naucratis. The latter had reportedly implemented extraordinarily repressive fiscal policies. An unknown orator (Pseudo-Demosthenes 56.8) blames him for exacerbating a famine by withholding exports of Egyptian grain and sending his agents out to find the best prices. This type of market intervention, where the state buys up grain from producers at fixed prices and then uses its monopsony power to negotiate the best prices abroad, is attested during the same period in Cyrene, although with better motives than Cleomenes had (Bresson 2011). The Ptolemies probably used it in Egypt, or at least relied on the same advantage for the sale of its abundant grain revenue abroad.

Aside from the privileges granted to some temples in the Delta, recorded in the so-called "Satrap stele," not much is known about Ptolemy's fiscal policies (Schäfer 2011, pp. 162–191). A group of texts from Tehne in Middle Egypt from c. 310 BC gives no hint of royal involvement in a land dispute on the temple estate, to whose priests its landholders paid a harvest tax (P.Loeb 13.19–21). One may guess that he intruded little on the domains of temples and powerful local elites. Ptolemy acquired Coele-Syria after

Antigonus' defeat in 301. A group of late Achaemenid and early Hellenistic ostraca in Aramaic from Idumea contains many receipts for taxes, both in kind and in money. The money receipts at the rate of 2 drachmas per person are consistent with biblical evidence for a poll tax, which probably continued into the Ptolemaic and Roman Periods (Lemaire 2007).

Ptolemy II Philadelphus is the one usually credited with the major fiscal reforms in Egypt, but this may be due partly to the fact that papyrological evidence only becomes abundant in his reign. Hieronymus of Cardia, a contemporary historian on whom later authors drew, reportedly estimated his annual revenue at 14 800 silver talents plus one or two million artabas of wheat (Wilcken 1899, pp. 412–413; Rostovtzeff 1941, pp. 1150–1153). The variegated nature of fiscal institutions observable in the papyri makes it extremely difficult to assess the reliability of this figure. The kings economized on silver, which was scarce in Egypt, and manipulated monetary policy for their own gain by introducing a closed currency system, in which gold and silver foreign coins had to be converted into the Ptolemaic standard. The value of bronze coins that circulated especially in the countryside was fixed to the silver drachma at a rate that exceeded their metallic worth, creating one of the largest and longest-lasting systems of fiduciary currency in the ancient world (von Reden 2007, pp. 43–48; see Chapter 14).

There was a wide variety of taxes in Ptolemaic Egypt, most of which cannot be discussed here in detail. The taxes on trade that must have generated great revenues in Alexandria and other urban centers are largely unknown, due to the rural provenance of most of our documentation. There were customs duties on the transport of goods charged at nome boundaries and on external trade (Vandorpe 2015). In the countryside at least, we know that there was a sales tax of 5 or, later, 10%, and a tax of 1/24th on the purchase of immovables. We hear of taxes on manumission, gifts, pastures, house rentals, animals, slaves, bathhouses, and many other things. The numerous professional taxes were in many cases probably the license fee paid by the contractor for exercising a state monopoly, passed on to the consumer in the form of higher prices. In addition, the state was able to collect revenue by means of assorted fees and fines. Huss (2011, pp. 189–236) provides an extensive bibliography on these taxes, but there is still no synthetic treatment of Ptolemaic taxation aside from Préaux (1939).

10.1.1 Introduction of Money Taxes

Although most royal revenue was probably paid in grain from agricultural land, the Ptolemies rapidly accelerated the monetization of Egypt through direct taxes on persons and indirect taxes on transactions that were paid in coin. The so-called “salt tax,” a kind of poll tax, was introduced in 264 BC, but seemingly disappears from our sources after 217. Three different rates are attested, ranging from 1 drachma 3 obols to 5 obols for men and 1 drachma to 1½ obols for women. Animals too were charged taxes per head, payable by their owners. To assess the taxes due, there was a house-to-house census of people and, apparently, of animals, although the latter were often just recorded in surveys of land. The inhabitants were grouped by profession or ethnic category: Greeks, Persians, and Arabs. Those classified as “Greeks,” including Jews and certain privileged Egyptians, were entitled to a symbolic exemption from a 1 obol surcharge paid with the salt tax (Clarysse and Thompson 2006).

A Demotic document from Upper Egypt shows that tax farmers were in charge of collecting the salt tax as well as the cloth or wool tax, which was paid only by women, at a rate of $3\frac{3}{4}$ (later $2\frac{3}{4}$) obols (P.Berl.Dem. III 13535+23677). Men were liable for compulsory labor on the dikes, either moving 30 cubic units (*naubia*) of dirt or paying a monetary tax of 2 drachmas. The same tax farmers or officials who collected the salt tax were apparently responsible for this tax, too (Devauchelle 1983, pp. 31–37; Vleeming 1994, pp. 10–14; Muhs 2005a, pp. 57–60). A papyrus from Elephantine mentions the omission of 149 men and 204 women from the registers of the salt tax, 77 women from the wool tax, and 74 men from the compulsory labor tax (P.Berl.Dem. III 13537; Quack 2004–2005). This seems to imply that not all women were liable for the wool tax – perhaps only 38%, if the omissions are proportionate to the actual number of taxpayers. The latter assumption would also imply that about 50% of men paid the tax in money instead of by performing labor.

There are early Ptolemaic receipts from Upper Egypt for a so-called “yoke” or “neck” tax and a closely related tax (*nḥt*) whose meaning is uncertain, payments of which were in both cases usually 2 or 4 drachmas, made by men only (Devauchelle 1983, pp. 39–62; Vleeming 1994, pp. 14–25). Muhs (1998, 2005a, pp. 30–32) dates them all to the early reign of Ptolemy II and argues that the yoke tax was a poll tax, which was replaced in 264 BC with the salt tax. However, several points speak against this: the high amounts, especially when one adds the *nḥt* tax sometimes paid with it; the variable installments; the fact that women did not pay; and the existence of two examples seemingly dated after the 22nd regnal year (O.Louvre 87 and 1424; Devauchelle 1983, pp. 48, 54; Muhs 2005a, p. 31). One bilingual receipt strongly suggests that the yoke tax was a type of transport tax (Vleeming 1994, p. 15). The amounts resemble those in Greek and Demotic receipts of this period that indicate the tax only by the name of the month (Muhs 2005a, pp. 37–39).

10.1.2 *Royal Monopolies*

The Ptolemaic fiscal administration made use of private contractors in numerous ways. A papyrus that modern scholars call the “Revenue Laws” of Ptolemy II contains regulations on royal monopolies and tax farming (P.Rev., 259/8 BC; for the tax-farming system, see Chapter 7). However, the text is not one systematic document, but a composite of different regulations over several years, written by a number of scribal hands (Bingen 2007a, pp. 157–188). Monopolies and tax farming are not clearly distinguished, because the former often entailed collection of the taxes associated with the monopolized goods, and because both were allocated by the same procedure: a public auction. The most complete information in the Revenue Laws papyrus concerns the oil monopoly, but there were similar monopolies on a wide range of goods. Aside from sesame oil produced by temples for their own consumption, the Ptolemies tightly regulated all stages of oil production, starting with cultivation (Armoni 2012, pp. 139–144, 218–222). The monopolies in Ptolemaic Egypt have still not been properly studied (Heichelheim 1933). In the third century BC, the local administration produced a sowing schedule that stipulated what crops had to be cultivated on royal land; one purpose of this institution was probably to facilitate the sale of monopolies (Vidal-Naquet 1967; Cuvigny 1985; Monson 2012a, pp. 28–29). For more on monopolies, see Box 10.1.

Box 10.1 “State monopolies.”*by Nico Dogaer*

Thousands of papyri inform us about the production and trade of commodities like papyrus, oils, beer, textiles, salt, and so on. In the Ptolemaic Period, the production and distribution of many of these products was subject to various forms of state control. Papyrologists refer to these arrangements as “state monopolies” or “royal monopolies,” because of perceived similarities to modern-day state monopolies.

The term “state monopoly” is used in the first place to denote sectors in which the state was the sole provider or granted the exclusive right to produce and sell certain commodities, such as oil, beer, or perfumes, or supply certain services, such as banking. The most famous is the early Ptolemaic oil monopoly, which is well known through the so-called Revenue Laws (P.Rev.; Bingen 1978b). A fixed amount of raw materials (e.g. sesame, castor, and later also poppy) had to be cultivated on royal land. The monopoly was farmed out to the highest bidder in each nome (the nature of this arrangement is disputed: it is unclear whether it concerned all revenues or only a 25% tax on sesame and castor cultivation). The farmers of the oil monopoly had to provide sureties for the sum they had guaranteed to the state. Raw materials and oil presses were supplied by state officials to “royal” oil workshops and the presses were sealed when not in use. The quality of the oil was controlled by officials. Retail prices were fixed, and in each area exclusive licenses were issued to traders, who had to sell a fixed quantity of oil; surplus oil in some nomes was transferred to other areas in which there was a shortage. High tariffs were imposed for the importation of oil, and severe sanctions were applied in case of illegal production or sale, or of bureaucratic misconduct.

In other cases, only part of the manufacture or distribution of products was subject to a “state monopoly,” such as the production and sale of papyrus, where certified “royal” papyrus intended for notaries existed alongside a free market for private persons (Lewis 1974). The production of linen was controlled by the state, whereas wool production was relatively free (Sijpesteijn 1985).

The use of the modern term “state monopoly” is still controversial. It can be difficult to distinguish between concessions and taxes related to the commodities involved. To confound matters even more, these taxes were often farmed out along with the concessions. The state monopolies were mainly studied in the first half of the twentieth century (Wilcken 1912; Préaux 1939; Rostovtzeff 1941), and the standard work remains Heichelheim (1933). Bingen’s (1978b) reinterpretation of the Revenue Laws has been influential: the extensive body of regulations pertaining to the oil industry should not be interpreted as a form of state planning, but rather as the result of the adaptation of the Greek institution of tax farming to particular Egyptian circumstances. The aim of the Ptolemies was to secure state revenues through tax or revenue farmers, and in order for these to post realistic bids, information and regulations were necessary. Von Reden has proposed a more favorable interpretation of the monopoly regulations: “The motivation was neither to maximize profits nor to minimize costs, but to ensure the most efficient production, secure distribution and raise a predictable cash income” (von Reden 2007, p. 147).

According to the established view, many state monopolies were converted into non-exclusive licenses and ultimately abandoned in the Roman Period. Others were preserved, and in particular the operation of mines and quarries was subject to firm imperial control (Wallace 1938b). In some areas, state control was even expanded, for instance in the extraction and sale of salt (Adams 2013). A recently published papyrus also provides interesting parallels to Ptolemaic practices in the perfume and papyrus industries (Benaissa 2016). The administration of the remaining state monopolies was increasingly delegated to the local population through liturgies. The trend of lessening direct state intervention seems to have continued in Late Antiquity, but the aims of the state were met through other means, such as compulsory hereditary membership of professional associations.

10.1.3 *Harvest and Other Taxes on Grain Land, Vineyards, and Gardens*

Distinct from the sowing schedule, which disappears by the second century BC, there was a separate survey of land according to crops (Verhoogt 1998, pp. 133–136). This too kept track of what cultivators grew, but its main purpose was to assess harvest taxes or rents due to the state. The term *ekphorion* can certainly mean “rent,” but Ps.-Aristotle’s *Oikonomika* claims that the main revenue from land in the Hellenistic East was called either the tithe (*dekate*) or the *ekphorion*, suggesting that the term “harvest tax” is more appropriate. This was evidently the case in Ptolemaic Egypt, where *ekphorion* was charged on both royal land, where the cultivators’ tenure was based on leaseholds or agreements with local authorities, and on private land (*idioktetos ge*), including land bought at royal auctions, where the buyers became full-fledged owners with legal rights of conveyance and inheritance. In Upper Egypt, the tax on such land was often called the *epigraphe* of a particular year, and a land survey from the Apollonopolite nome demonstrates that this *epigraphe* refers to the “assessment” of the *ekphorion*, which averaged 5 1/3 artabas per aroura in that nome (P.Haun. IV 70.284). Presumably, the rate varied according to the land’s productivity, because the so-called “island” land near the river was charged more on average than land on higher ground (Vandorpe 2000; Monson 2012b, pp. 165–172, 2016b).

The rates in the Thebaid are comparable to those on royal land in Middle Egypt. We know most about the rates assessed using the survey according to crops from documents concerning royal land in the Arsinoite nome. Each village had a distinctive scale of rents, usually with one standard rate that applied to most land. Standard rates were normally 4–6 artabas per aroura, which excludes the various other small taxes that landholders were required to pay. During the annual survey, the village scribe could adjust the rate on any individual plot up or down, but such changes were relatively infrequent (less than 10% of the holdings in P.Tebt. I 88), and the rates usually remained within that scale. A thorough revision of the system was apparently no regular occurrence. A dispute between royal cultivators and the administration led to a replacement of the old rents with new ones in one Arsinoite village. The changes were carried out according to the guiding principle that land should be taxed “according to its quality” (*kata ten areten*) (P.Tebt. III 829; Cuvigny 1985, pp. 43–47). Thus, unlike the *apomoira* on vineyards and gardens, the harvest taxes

or “rents” on royal land were not a percentage of the estimated harvest, although they did correlate to the quality of the land (Monson 2012a, pp. 18–22).

Ptolemy II also instituted new rules for the taxation of vineyards and gardens or orchards, which are known to us from the Revenue Laws as well as numerous other texts. The principal tax on them was called the *apomoira*, indicating that it was a “portion” of the estimated harvest. For most land of this type, the tax amounted to 1/6 of the annual harvest. The vineyards of cleruchic landholders who were away on active military service, as well as artificially irrigated vineyards in the Thebaid, were entitled to a reduced rate of 1/10 of their harvest. From the second century BC onward, this tax was usually paid in money rather than in kind. On top of the *apomoira*, there was a land tax called “money rents” (*argyrikoî phoroi*) or the “per-aroura tax” (*eparourion*), whose name suggests that it was a flat rate, although several rates are attested. Temples had earlier levied a similar tax within their domains, but Ptolemy II’s decree (P.Rev. 37) extended this to all owners of vineyards and orchards in Egypt, even on cleruchic land and gift-estates, earmarking the revenue to finance the cult of his sister-wife Arsinoe II (Clarysse and Vandorpe 1998a; Maresch 2009; Monson 2016b, pp. 194–195; cf. P.Heid. VIII 418 intr.).

Much less is known about the taxation of cleruchic land as compared to royal land, but new documents are beginning to shed some light on this. A group of unpublished Demotic land surveys from Magdola in the south-west Arsinoite nome, dating to the third century BC, indicate that a standard rate of 5 1/4 artabas per aroura applied to 25- and even 100-aroura cleruchs. The royal cultivators there paid a higher rate of 7 1/2 artabas per aroura (Monson 2016b). A petition to King Ptolemy VIII from the 100-aroura “cavalry settlers” (*katoikoi hippeis*) in Egypt claims that their taxes were assessed “according to the crops on the basis of the land survey” before the year 158/7 BC. At that time, Ptolemy VI’s finance minister instituted a lump sum to be distributed among them either as a 2-artaba tax or as an *epigraphe* – presumably, a tax based on land quality (P.Lips. II 124). Those in the Arsinoite nome had fallen deeply into arrears by about 137 BC, and soon afterwards Ptolemy VIII abolished the contributions (*eisphorai*) and harvest taxes (*epigraphai*) on the *katoikoi*. By the end of the second century BC, they and other cleruchs were charged only a low land tax of about 1 artaba per aroura. However, an official letter (BGU VIII 1760) and a royal decree (C.Ord.Ptol. 75–76) from the reign of Cleopatra VII suggest that the Ptolemies occasionally resorted to special levies such as these in times of fiscal crisis (Monson 2012b, pp. 176–184; cf. Bingen 2007a, pp. 141–150).

10.1.4 Temples and Taxation

The Ptolemies integrated temples more tightly within the administrative and fiscal system than they had been before. The diversion of the *apomoira* to the cult of Arsinoe II has already been mentioned. During the Great Theban Revolt (206–186 BC), Ptolemy V promised the temples that he would abolish a certain “one-artaba tax” (*artabieia*) on their lands, but later in the second century BC some temple cultivators still paid an *artabieia* in addition to a harvest tax (*epigraphe*), before Ptolemy VIII abolished it again in 118 BC. The state may have compensated them with a subsidy (*syntaxis*), but this was apparently earmarked for special purposes such as the payment of salaries for priests or priestesses charged with specific duties, or else it was subject to restrictions (Armoni 2012, pp. 65–69).

For example, it was illegal for temples to use the *syntaxis* to purchase new priestly offices from the state (UPZ II 200; Armoni 2012, pp. 150–151). It may have been the collection of harvest taxes from temple land in the Thebaid in exchange for the *syntaxis* that sparked the Great Revolt (Vandorpe 2005).

The Egyptian temples had to pay a tax called the *epistatikon* to the superintendent of the temples (*epistates ton hieron*), who was a state official at the nome level with subordinate superintendents (*epistatai*) in each temple (P.Tebt. I 5.53; cf. P.Ox.Griff. 69 and 74). In the Late Ptolemaic Period, there may be some evidence for the priests paying this tax individually, as they increasingly did under Roman rule at least by the second century AD, but it seems likely that the temple as a whole normally paid it on their behalf (O.Edfou II 244 and III 362; Monson 2014a). Despite royal taxes and oversight of their finances, the temples clearly maintained substantial estates and other sources of revenue. The high priest (*archiereus* or *lesonis*) served as a kind of tax farmer, managing these resources and profiting from them in exchange for underwriting the priests' stipends and the state's revenue (Monson 2012b, pp. 212–218).

10.1.5 The Late Ptolemaic Period

Ptolemaic fiscal policy in the first century BC is obscure due to the relative scarcity of papyrological evidence, but some notable features stand out. Two related texts (P.Tebt. I 103 and 189) from a village in the south-west Arsinoite nome, dated to 94 or 61 BC, show the existence of a money tax called *syntaxis* and *epistatikon* that was assessed on adult males at standard rates based on a census (*laographia*). After this was published, several leading scholars believed that it showed the existence of a general poll tax called *syntaxis* that prefigured the one known in the Roman Period (P.Tebt. I 103 intr.; W.Chr. 288 intr.), while the *epistatikon* could be the temple tax mentioned previously, which was sometimes levied as capitation tax on priests (e.g. P.Tebt. II 306). Wallace (1938b) even proposed that the Ptolemies were the first to introduce a seven-year census cycle. Since the 1950s, most scholars have doubted this, but have failed to provide any satisfactory explanation of the Ptolemaic tax called *syntaxis* (Tcherikover 1950; Evans 1957; Rathbone 1993).

Other evidence suggests that capitation taxes in money and special levies for military expenses took on an increasingly important role in the Late Ptolemaic Period (Monson 2014b). Ptolemy XII was deeply indebted to Roman moneylenders, and debased the silver currency in 53/2 BC. The enduring consequences of this crisis may have been responsible for the high capitation taxes in the Herakleopolite nome that we find under Cleopatra VII. There was evidently a reduced rate for military settlers (*katoikoi*), who are designated in one tax account as “Greeks,” although such categories in Ptolemaic Egypt must be understood primarily in fiscal rather than ethnic terms. While there is scattered evidence for compulsory purchases and special levies for military provisions in the Ptolemaic Period, a text from early in Cleopatra's reign suggests increasing fiscal pressure. The villagers of a Herakleopolite village petitioned the *strategos*, who was partly responsible for the increases in the “grain tax” (*sitonion*), for military provision, which was levied in silver – from 2 silver drachmas to over 7 drachmas (BGU VIII 1846). Contemporary receipts for this tax in the Arsinoite nome suggest that it was levied there, too (Monson 2014a).

Toward the end of her reign, Cleopatra reformed the currency, minting new bronze coins with stamped denominations, which Augustus and his successors took over without substantial modifications.

10.2 Roman Egypt

There were major fiscal reforms in Egypt after its incorporation into the Roman Empire. For historians, the changes are significant not least because they may reflect broader imperial policies, which would be unknown if it were not for Egypt's extraordinary documentation. A priority of future research ought to be to determine what effect political transitions such as this one had on the overall burden of taxation. In the past, scholars have usually emphasized the special position of this province, since it was entrusted to an equestrian prefect and senators were prohibited from entering it without special permission (Jördens 2009, pp. 36–41). As the source of much of the grain needed for Rome, it seems logical to suppose that Augustus and his successors were eager to maximize their revenue. However, that imperative was only stronger under the Ptolemies, and Augustus' reforms must be seen in light of the institutions that he found. The evidence sketched here suggests a decrease in taxes under Roman rule.

10.2.1 Capitation Taxes

The two pillars of Roman imperial taxation were the land and the capitation taxes, *tributum soli* and *tributum capitis* (Neesen 1980; Rathbone 1993). The poll tax came to be known as *laographia*, a word that literally means a “population register” or “census.” The earliest evidence is from 23 BC in the Thebaid and 19/18 BC in the Arsinoite, although the poll tax there was called *syntaxis*, and some *syntaxis* receipts from Karanis must date to the Late Ptolemaic Period (Monson 2014a,b). One of the Augustan innovations was to reform the census by creating a 7-year cycle, first attested in 11/10 BC – switching to a 14-year cycle in the early first century AD (Bagnall and Frier 2006). The census was used to assess a variety of other minor capitation taxes, most of which had existed in the Ptolemaic Period. For example, in the Arsinoite nome, the poll tax was bundled with the salt tax, charged at a rate similar to the early Ptolemaic salt tax (Wallace 1938a, pp. 116–134).

Many scholars assume that Augustus introduced the poll tax during his very first year in Egypt, because the contemporary geographer Strabo writes that a revolt broke out in the southern city of Thebes in that year “because of the taxes” (*dia tous phorous*) (Rostovtzeff 1920, p. 346; Rathbone 1993, p. 88). However, the poll tax was relatively low in Thebes, especially compared to the Arsinoite nome, and the region had a long history of revolts, caused at least in part by the fiscal policies of the Ptolemies. Its immediate outbreak after the annexation suggests that it was an attempt to take advantage of the political transition rather than a response to new taxes, which it would take time to implement.

The high rates of special capitation taxes in the Late Ptolemaic Period (the money equivalent of perhaps 5–7 artabas of wheat annually per person) suggest that the Roman poll tax was not necessarily a heavier burden (Monson 2014b). The annual rate was

16 drachmas per person in the nomes of the Thebaid, but in Thebes itself it was only 10 drachmas, while the Dakhla Oasis had a rate of 9 drachmas 1 obol. Other nomes from which there is evidence had two different rates: a standard one and a reduced rate for metropolitans and members of the so-called gymnasial group; usually, the rates were 16 and 8 drachmas, respectively (the Mendesian, Memphite, Herakleopolite, and Hermopolite nomes), but the privileged rate was 12 drachmas in the Oxyrhynchite, while both rates were significantly higher in the Arsinoite nome, at 40 and 20 drachmas, respectively (Heilporn 2009, pp. 77–81). The 16 drachmas that the majority of Egyptians paid was equivalent to only 2 artabas of wheat, and even the highest rate, 40 drachmas (or about 5 artabas of wheat), was probably no higher than the capitation taxes attested under Ptolemy XII and Cleopatra VII (Monson 2014b).

The main beneficiaries of the Augustus poll-tax reforms were the metropolitans, that is, residents of the nome capitals – if it is true that they had no special status in the Ptolemaic Period (but see BGU XX 2845 intr., pp. 54–55). Under Augustus, they became entitled to the reduced rate of the poll tax, except apparently in the Thebaid. A slightly reduced rate for “Greeks” or “settlers” (*katoikoi*) is already attested during the Late Ptolemaic Period in the Herakleopolite nome. These probably correspond to the so-called “gymnasial group” (*hoi apo tou gymnasiou*) of the Roman Period, who likewise paid the reduced rate. In the Arsinoite nome, this group continued to designate itself by the Ptolemaic term *katoikoi*. The existence of many village gymnasia in the Ptolemaic Period and the early reign of Augustus would have made it difficult for the government to control who was entitled to the reduced rate. This probably prompted the special census of the gymnasial group in AD 4/5 (to which subsequent members were required to trace their genealogy) and the establishment of just one gymnasium in the *metropolis* of each nome (Nelson 1979, pp. 10–39; Bronx 2013, p. 149; see also Chapter 18). Besides Alexandrian citizens, a limited number of priests were fully exempt from the poll tax, but according to a petition from the Herakleopolite nome, this privilege was derived from the Ptolemaic Period (BGU IV 1198; Kruse 2002, p. 632).

Added to the poll tax were a variety of other capitation taxes (Wallace 1938a, pp. 136–180; Capponi 2005, pp. 132–155). The salt tax is attested only in the Arsinoite nome as part of a bundle called *syntaximon*, which included the poll tax, at a rate comparable to that in the Early Ptolemaic Period. A dike tax is attested throughout Egypt, but in the first century AD the Romans introduced an additional requirement of five days of labor, which is attested in the Arsinoite nome (Sijpesteijn 1964). There had been a police tax in Ptolemaic Egypt payable by the cleruchs, but in the Roman Period this was extended to the general population, often paid together with the poll tax (Homoth-Kuhs 2005). Just as in the Ptolemaic Period, temples paid a tax called *epistatikon* to the state, but starting in the second century AD this was usually distributed among the priests themselves as a capitation tax (e.g. P.Tebt. II 306; Monson 2014a). After the failed revolt in AD 70, the Jews in Egypt paid an additional 2-drachma “Jewish tax” (Thompson 1982; see Chapter 20).

10.2.2 Land Taxes

The *tributum soli* or land tax in Roman Egypt was believed until recently to have undergone no major changes under Augustus (Rathbone 1993; Jördens 2009, pp. 95–111). This is perhaps true if we restrict ourselves to royal land, increasingly called “public” land, whose

“rent” (*ekphorion*) may be regarded as a form of taxation (Rowlandson 1996, pp. 71–72). Just as in the Ptolemaic Period, we find a range of different rates in each village, corresponding presumably to the quality of the land. However, the rates seem somewhat lower. Rowlandson suggests that the median rate in the Oxyrhynchite nome was about $3\frac{1}{2}$ – $4\frac{1}{2}$ artabas; she cites a fourth-century AD summary of land revenue in the entire nome for a “norm” during the Principate of 3 art./ar. on public land, but that text may reflect later changes (see next section) (Rowlandson 1996, pp. 72–73, 75). Recall the average $5\frac{1}{3}$ artabas per aroura, discussed earlier, for *ekphorion* in the entire Apollonopolite nome and median rates ranging from 4 to 8 artabas per aroura in the Arsinoite during the Ptolemaic Period. Among the complaints to which the prefect Tiberius Julius Alexander responded in his edict of AD 68 was that officials were estimating the rates based on the average yields of previous years. He condemned the practice and insisted that rates be adjusted annually following inspection of the actual flood conditions (Chalon 1964, pp. 222–229). By the late second century AD, however, there was a new procedure in place, whereby the burden fell upon the landholder to request an inspection (*episkepsis*) if he or she wanted a reduction due to a poor flood or other circumstances (Jördens 2009, pp. 116–119).

Turning to private land, the changes are more remarkable. The received view is that private land emerged in the Roman Period as a result of the confiscation and sale of public land, and especially the privatization of land belonging to the military settlers (*katoikoi*), who had enjoyed a privileged tax rate in the Ptolemaic Period. An important new text published by Chang (2014) from the Hermopolite nome, which dates to AD 99/100, divides land into two main categories: “catoecic” (*ge katoikike*) and “of the administration” (*dioikeseos*). The “catoecic land” is then subdivided into “catoecic land” in the narrow juridical sense (derived from Ptolemaic settlers’ land) and “private land” (*idioktetos ge*). The significant distinction was a fiscal one: “catoecic land” in the broad sense was subject to a fixed land tax of typically 1 artaba per aroura, instead of a rent (*ekphoria*) based on the quality of the land (Chang 2014, pp. 101–119, 124–136). Most of the private land in the Roman Period, which came under the “catoecic land” rubric in the Hermopolite nome, must have been derived from Ptolemaic private land (*idioktetos ge*) that used to be charged “rent.”

In other words, the Roman administration extended the 1-artaba rate, previously enjoyed only by the Ptolemaic military settlers, to all private landowners in Egypt. The extraordinary levies that the Ptolemies occasionally assigned to the military settlers’ land vanish under Roman rule, so that this group enjoyed even lower taxes. The reforms were probably due to Augustus, but the government backtracked at the end of Tiberius’ reign, when the prefect Flaccus (AD 32–38) imposed *ekphorion* on private land and buyers of public land at auction. These higher taxes prompted furious complaints from landowners until the emperor Claudius issued a decree in AD 41 revoking Flaccus’ edict. Conflicting interpretations of the tax legislation persisted under subsequent prefects until Tiberius Julius Alexander proclaimed: “It is an injustice, when the purchasers have bought property and paid the purchase price, to demand *ekphoria* from them on their own estates as if they were public tenants” (Chalon 1964, pp. 144–148). Moreover, the *apomoira* tax on vineyards and gardens or orchards was converted from a share of the harvest into a fixed money tax, which was substantially less than the sixth or tenth of the estimated crop demanded in the Ptolemaic Period (Wallace 1938a, pp. 53–59). Such

reforms provided strong incentives for landowners to improve their yields through productive investments (Monson 2012b, pp. 159–208).

Early in the reign of Augustus, an edict of the prefect Petronius gave temples the choice of paying a rent to the state for the right to keep control of their own temple land or of having it converted into royal land in exchange for the subsidy (*syntaxis*) (P.Tebt. II 302). This regulation cannot have affected all temple land, because some was effectively in private ownership already, and continued to be treated as such. The result was that temple land became a mere subcategory of either royal or private land, regardless of whether the temple maintained residual rights to the tax revenue. A granary account from the Arsinoite nome distinguishes clearly between “royal temple land,” which was charged *ekphorion*, and privately owned temple land, which was charged the 1-artaba tax (P.Berl.Leihg. I 5; Monson 2012b, pp. 131–141).

10.2.3 *Limits on Monopolies*

The low-tax regime of Roman Egypt is evident not only in the land taxes but also in the regulation of the economy more generally. The evidence for state monopolies in the Roman Period drops off precipitously, so one suspects that many were abandoned, or at least that the state’s control over production was relaxed (Wallace 1938a, pp. 181–190; Heichelheim 1933, p. 194; Reiter 2004, pp. 172–180). Monopolies of salt, oil, and beer, among other things, are attested. In the case of salt, retailers bid for the concession of a district but had to sell at prices fixed by the government (P.Mich. I 123 recto and 128). An association charter of AD 47 shows that a group of salt merchants held a village’s concession together and enforced price regulations among themselves (P.Mich. V 245). Related to monopoly revenues are the professional and trade taxes that the Roman state continued to levy on registered persons, as in the Ptolemaic Period; such persons could be limited and controlled through membership in associations (Wallace 1938a, pp. 191–213; Dross-Krüpe 2011, pp. 193–199).

10.2.4 *Tax Collection Reformed: The Liturgical System*

Administrative changes during the Roman Period had profound effects on tax collection. Reforms in the reign of Trajan (AD 98–117) are probably responsible for the mature liturgical system evident in the second century, by which most state offices were transformed into compulsory public services assigned according to a person’s wealth (Palme 1989, p. 31; cf. Oertel 1917; Lewis 1997; see also Chapter 4). Just as under the Ptolemies, many taxes in the Early Roman Period were farmed out to private contractors. Already in the first century AD, however, scattered evidence points to sporadic uses of compulsion and wealth assessment to fill posts when there were no volunteers (Palme 1989, pp. 27–30; Jördens 2009, pp. 267–271, 287–292; Monson 2012b, pp. 236–245). An edict of Tiberius Julius Alexander condemns the behavior of local officials, who were forcing unwilling persons to accept bids for tax farms (Chalon 1964, pp. 123–136). The liturgical system was designed to prevent acute cases of coercion like these by doing away with the institution of tax farming altogether and distributing financial liability for tax collection among the property owners instead.

A liturgical official called the *apaitetes* emerges in the Trajanic Period, with responsibility for global levies (*merismoî*) repartitioned within communities, especially for the recovery of arrears from money taxes. After about AD 170, these officials became responsible for a wider range of taxes, including those in kind (Palme 1989). A peculiarity of the Arsinoite nome is the office of *nomarchia*, which was introduced at the beginning of the Roman Period and differs from the Ptolemaic office of that title. Reiter (2004, pp. 57–91) has shown that it remained a voluntary tax farm until the early third century AD, long after other tax officials in Egypt had become liturgists. Nomarchs in the Roman Period were responsible for a variety of taxes, including the sales tax (*enkyklion*), customs dues of 1 or 2%, taxes on certain trades (weavers, brewers, millers, bakers) or productive resources (fisheries, pasturage, hunting), and a special money tax on royal land (Reiter 2004, pp. 100–262). Similar taxes on sales and trade were levied throughout Egypt (Wallace 1938a, pp. 214–237). The nomarchs in the Arsinoite nome were there mainly to guarantee and manage the collection, for which they usually relied on subaltern tax farmers or village elders (Reiter 2004, pp. 263–286).

Customs duties were charged on goods transported from one nome to another, as well as into and out of the country (Wallace 1938a, pp. 255–276; Sijpesteijn 1987a). The famous Musiris papyrus provides a glimpse into the tremendous revenues that must have accrued to Rome from the trade in luxury goods with India via Egypt (De Romanis 1998; Morelli 2011). Unfortunately, the nature of the papyrological evidence, with its concentration in the villages and *metropoleis* of Middle Egypt, makes it difficult to gauge the significance of Mediterranean or Red Sea trade relative to land and capitation taxes. If we had central customs-duty accounts from Alexandria, our picture might look very different.

The introduction of city councils in the *metropoleis* by Septimius Severus in AD 200/1 marks a watershed in the fiscal administration of Egypt. It empowered the councilors, composed of the wealthiest metropolitan citizens, to appoint the liturgical officials in their nome (Hagedorn 2007). The aforementioned liturgists called *apaitetai* were involved not only in collecting taxes on behalf of the city, but also in managing the city's own properties and fulfilling its obligations to the central state (Palme 1989, pp. 59–62). The result of the reform was to make Egypt much more like other provinces of the Roman Empire, where cities traditionally acted as the political and administrative center, with direct control over the fiscal resources of their hinterland.

10.3 The Later Roman and Byzantine Period

10.3.1 *The Impact of Crises on Taxation*

Supplying the military with its provisions became one of the most pressing issues by the third century AD, as a result of an increasing number of wars. In the Early Imperial Period, deliveries of grain and other provisions had been organized with the help of private contractors. Because they were financed out of regular tax revenue, they have left relatively little trace in the papyrological evidence (Mitthof 2001, pp. 39–40). In the late second century AD, the nome governor (*strategos*) could order compulsory purchases of barley for the cavalry, which were distributed among the villages and collected by the

soldiers, who issued a receipt to the elders for monetary reimbursement. As a result of increased military spending at the beginning of the third century, however, such requisitions were formalized into a new tax called the *annona militaris*, which served to supply active soldiers in Egypt – especially against raiding tribes from the deserts – and in the empire at large (Mitthof 2001, pp. 39–40, 43, 51–64; see also Carrié 1977, pp. 377–381 and Palme 1989, pp. 62–64).

The Antonine plague and economic instability caused disruptions to tax-collecting that undermined many of Egypt's fiscal institutions. The imperial currency debasements and price inflation rendered payments of money taxes at fixed rates unfeasible and complicated any attempt to assess them fairly. The last poll-tax receipt is dated to AD 248, and the census cycle ends in AD 257/8, although local population lists were maintained for some purposes (Bagnall and Frier 2006). Problems with maintaining accurate data on landholdings, especially public tenancies, are probably to blame for the de facto privatization of public land and the ossification of “rents” (*ekphoria*) in kind at fixed rates per aoura, just as on private land. Public land was simply joined to private estates, shifting the responsibility for finding tenants onto the landowners. Yet, it retained its distinction as public land insofar as it was still charged at a higher rate in accordance with the rents that the state was accustomed to receiving from it (Bowman 1985, pp. 148–149; Rowlandson 1996, pp. 68–69).

10.3.2 *Fiscal Reforms Under Diocletian and Constantine*

The administrative and fiscal reforms under Diocletian (AD 284–305) and Constantine (AD 306–337) attempted to restore order within the empire. From an Egyptian perspective, the changes were so fundamental that papyrologists label the period from AD 284 to the Arab conquest in AD 642 as “Byzantine Egypt,” marking a clear break with earlier Roman institutions. The city councils introduced in AD 200/1 had already made way for greater civic autonomy. However, starting in the reign of Diocletian, Egyptian institutions were more systematically aligned with those of other provinces. Around AD 300, the traditional division of the country into nomes under a *strategos* was abolished in favor of smaller administrative units (*pagi*) headed by a municipal official (*exactor civitatis*) (Maresch 2007). Citizens of the *metropoleis* enjoyed even greater tax privileges relative to the rural population. Taxes overall remained low, especially by comparison with the Ptolemaic Period, so the civic administration depended all the more on compulsory public services, which increasingly gave families of large landowners responsibility for taxation (Bagnall 1993a, pp. 154–156).

Diocletian ordered empire-wide fiscal reforms based on a dual system of capitation (*capitatio*) and land (*ingatio*) taxes. The main source for their implementation in Egypt is an edict issued by the prefect Aristius Optatus in AD 297 (P.Cair.Isid. 1); the justification given is that the tax burden had become oppressive for some and too light for others. The new system established a fixed scale of tax rates per aoura of land for each indiction period. These rates were set according to the land's quality and coupled with a standard poll tax on the agrarian population (Johnson and West 1949, pp. 230–233; Jördens 2009, pp. 96–120). In connection with these fiscal reforms, Optatus ordered a full census of

Egypt with particular attention to landholdings, for which there were evidently no longer any reliable records (CPR XXIII 20). In the Arsinoite nome, irrigation and drainage problems were causing a decline in productivity that made the high taxes on public land in the Early Roman Period unrealistic (Bagnall 1985b, p. 299). To help stabilize the monetary system, Diocletian levied payments in precious metals (especially gold) on landholders, which Constantine standardized into regular supplementary land taxes. Bagnall (1993a, pp. 156–157) estimates an average 1.6 artabas of wheat or barley and money taxes equivalent to another half artaba for an overall burden of about 2.1 artabas per *aroura*, which is quite low by Ptolemaic standards.

The persons responsible for the taxes were liturgists appointed by the city council from among the landowning elites, who hired assistants to do the collecting. The long-term trend, evident by the fifth and sixth centuries AD, was for a handful of so-called “great houses” to serve as public authorities on behalf of the city, with business managers who collected not only rents on the estate but also taxes on the population as a whole (Gascou 1985; Bagnall 1993a, pp. 159–160; Zuckerman 2004, pp. 115–142; Hickey 2012). The blurring of distinctions between public offices and private estates sounds anathema to the principles of fiscal modernity. Late Antique Egypt fits a broader pattern of imperial systems with dispersed rather than centralized fiscal authority, where rulers are more concerned with maintaining the political equilibrium than with wresting wealth and power from local elites. The Byzantine Empire was relatively stable and managed to maintain its fiscal institutions better than the Western Mediterranean, where the Germanic kingdoms were increasingly compelled to forego the long-term benefits of taxation in order to obtain loyalty through distributions of land (Wickham 2005, pp. 56–152).

10.4 Conclusion

This survey of taxation in Greco-Roman and Late Antique Egypt represents something of a work in progress, due to the current state of research. Nevertheless, even a cursory glance at fiscal reforms in Egypt from the Hellenistic to the Byzantine Period illustrates several remarkable transitions. The Ptolemaic regime was marked by its extraordinary penetration into local village and temple economies, including innovations in land surveying, census-taking, and administration. While the Roman state was no less present in the Egyptian countryside, and demonstrated its power to institute radical fiscal reforms, the burden of taxation generally appears to have decreased at least for the landowners and metropolitan residents, who rose to an extraordinary position of economic dominance that had previously been occupied by priests, officials, and soldiers. Disruptions to the tax system during the third century AD were rectified with the reforms of Diocletian and Constantine, which imposed an empire-wide model on Egypt. Yet, the long-term trend under imperial rule continued, shifting wealth and power increasingly to landowning urban elites at the expense of centralized institutional control. This obviously simplifies a more complex story, but at least it illustrates how crucial fiscal institutions might be to understanding the general economic and social history of Egypt.

FURTHER READING

Rostovtzeff's (1941) *The Social and Economic History of the Hellenistic World* is a monumental work by one of the giants in ancient history, whose bold interpretation of Ptolemaic state finance has largely withstood decades of scrutiny. Préaux's (1939) *L'économie royale des Lagides* has also stood the test of time, owing to its exhaustive use of the available evidence and a subtle appreciation of the sociological aspects of Ptolemaic state finance. Huss (2011) provides a list of taxes known in Ptolemaic Egypt, with extensive bibliographies on each, but limited historical interpretation. Armoni's (2012) study of the *basilikos grammateus* examines state expenditure, taxation, and monopolies, which this official of the Ptolemaic fiscal administration oversaw.

Wallace's (1938a) *Taxation in Roman Egypt* endures as the standard work on taxation in Roman Egypt thanks to its comprehensive coverage, and is a point of reference for all later studies. Rowlandson's (1996) *Landowners and Tenants in Roman Egypt*, probably the best study on landholding in Roman Egypt, offers a good overview of taxes and rents on land. Mitthof's (2001) *Annona Militaris* provides an authoritative treatment of the financing of the Roman military from taxation in the Late Roman and Byzantine Period. Palme (1989) examines the nature and evolution of an important tax office (*apaitetes*) from its introduction by Trajan at the beginning of the second century AD until the Arab conquest. Reiter's (2004) detailed study of the tax office of nomarch in the Arsinoite nome contains valuable information about a variety of taxes and the general fiscal administration in Roman Egypt. Finally, Zuckerman (2004) offers an up-to-date analysis of the most important dossier of texts for fiscal institutions in Late Antique Egypt.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Security and Border Policy: Army and Police

Christelle Fischer-Bovet and Patrick Sängner

The papyrological material, notably official correspondence and soldiers' family archives, provides a unique perspective on the lives of soldiers in Greco-Roman Egypt, the organization and composition of the Ptolemaic and Roman army, and the army's military, paramilitary, and social functions within society – specific and diverse insights we lack for most of the ancient armies. The same applies to the police apparatus observable in Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt: thanks to papyri, the tasks, internal composition, and administrative character of the police forces can be investigated in greater detail than anywhere else in the ancient world. Yet, the distribution of sources is highly uneven across Egypt and across time. In addition, our knowledge of military equipment, tactics, and training is still incomplete for Ptolemaic Egypt, because no ancient military treaties describing this army have been preserved and archeological and iconographical material remains limited. Due to the extent and the longevity of the Roman Empire, the variety of sources that are available for the Roman army are, of course, far more numerous. The sources from Egypt provide the opportunity to complete and deepen our knowledge of how the Roman army governed and secured a province and encourage comparative case studies on similarities and differences with other regions.

Whenever the term “police” is used, this should be understood as anachronistic, since an executive police force in a modern sense did not, of course, exist in Antiquity.

11.1 The Ptolemaic Army

The Ptolemaic army has been, surprisingly, the object of only a small number of monographs. The work of Lesquier remained the basis for any research until recently, when it was complemented by studies on Hellenistic mercenaries (Griffith 1935) and

armies (Launey 1949). The papyrological sources concern above all the social and economic lives of soldiers in the countryside, especially the cleruchic system; that is, the settlement of soldiers with land allotment in exchange for military service. Therefore, there has been ongoing scholarly attention to the functioning of the cleruchic system, its organization, and the role of cleruchs in the economy. The essential list of cleruchs compiled by Uebel (1968), with a short overview of the system, can now be complemented by Scheuble's exhaustive study of the cavalry cleruchs (Scheuble-Reiter 2012; Stefanou 2013). A second debate evolved around the ethnic diversity of the army and the role of Egyptians within it. The advance of Demotic studies has largely contributed to the latter, as can be seen from the 1970s on in the work of Peremans and Clarysse, in Van't Dack (1988), in Winnicki's numerous studies (e.g. 1985), or, more recently, in the examination of soldiers' bilingual archives from garrison towns such as Pathyris, by Vandorpe and Waebens (2010a). Fischer-Bovet (2014) explores further ethnic interaction and the relation between the army and the Egyptian temples. Finally, a renewed interest in military equipment and organization is visible in the work of Sekunda (2001), on the reforms of the Ptolemaic and Seleucid armies. A Romanization of these armies in the 160s BC has since been questioned by the author himself.

11.1.1 *Organization and Reforms*

The organization of the army resembles that of the other Hellenistic armies, with some particular developments, especially between the troubled times of the 220s and 160s BC (Fischer-Bovet 2014, chapter 4). The best sources are treaties by the Tacticians (e.g. Asclepiodotus, Aelian, and Arrian) and the description by Polybius of Ptolemy IV's army at the battle of Raphia in 217 BC, which also signals an ongoing reorganization (5.64–65). Moreover, papyri and inscriptions often indicate soldiers' places of origin (*patrides*), units (*tagmata*), and ranks (*epitrophai*) (BGU XIV 2367). The distribution of the sources is uneven, however, because they mostly come from the Arsinoite, Herakleopolite, and Oxyrhynchite nomes and from second-century BC garrison towns in Upper Egypt. All military functions found in Egypt were collected in volumes II and VIII of the *Prosopographia Ptolemaica* (Pros. Ptol.), with updates on the Trismegistos platform under "People."

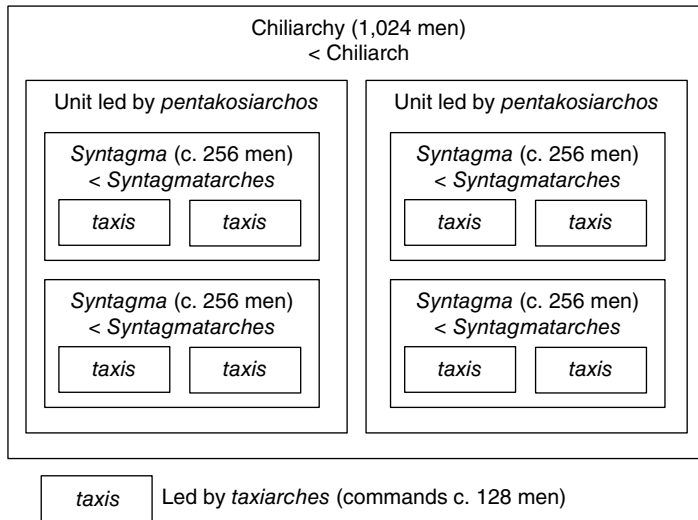
The exact titles of the highest military *commanders* are uncertain. At the battle of Raphia, the highest commanders led between 2000 and 4000 men, and in rare cases 8000, 12 500, and 20 000, but Polybius does not indicate their rank. In the papyrological sources, they usually were chiliarchs (infantry commanders), hipparchs (cavalry commanders), *hegemones* (commanders), or *strategoi* (generals). The titlature of soldiers is given as "of the men of," followed by the name of one of these high officers, called "eponymous officers" by papyrologists (Fischer-Bovet and Clarysse 2012) (e.g. Diogenes: "Cyrenaean, of the men of Diodorus, 100-aroura-man of the first hipparchy" P.Giss. 2, col. ii, ll. 6–7).

11.1.1.1 *Infantry*

The tactical unit was the phalanx of 16 lines deep – sometimes deeper, as at the battle of Raphia (Polybius 18.30.1). The term *phalangites* is never used in the documentary sources, but *pezos* ("infantryman"), *stratiotes* ("soldier"), and *idiotes* ("private") are employed. In the

third century BC, the largest regiment of infantry, made of hoplites armed with the sarissa, was the chiliarchy (*chiliarchia*) of 1,024 soldiers, led by a chiliarch (*chiliarchos* or *chilarches*) and divided into two units headed by commanders of 512 men, the *pentakosiarchoi* (see Figure 11.1). Similarly, these regiments were divided into two *syntagma*, with *syntagmatarches* at their head. Finally, each *syntagma* was split into two *taxeis*, with officers called *taxiarchai* or *taxiarchoi*. Through gradual adaptation in the 220s–160s BC, or following a

III c. BC



II-I c. BC

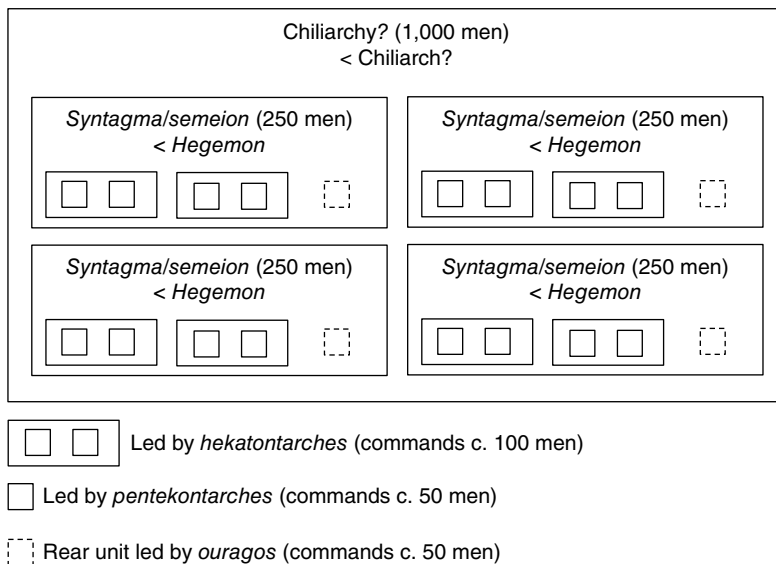


Figure 11.1 Ptolemaic infantry units. Source: courtesy Christelle Fischer-Bovet.

reform in the 160s, there were no longer units of 512 men led by *pentakosiarchoi*, only four *syntagmata*, divided into two units of 100 men each (*hekatontarchai*) and one rear unit of 50 men led by an *ouragos*, probably to allow more flexible formation.

The standing army (i.e. the forces maintained at peacetime) was composed of cleruchs (serving in turn) and of *misthophoroi*. The cleruchs were infantrymen, who received a land grant (*kleros*) of 25 or 30 arouras, while the *misthophoroi* or *xenoi* were mercenaries (although they included immigrants' sons born in Egypt), who earned a *misthos* of 1 silver drachma per day or less, plus a wheat ration (*opsonion*). This is a simplification: the relationship between the type of infantry and the remuneration they received was certainly more flexible and complex, as shown by the titles *misthophoroi klerouchoi* and *taktomisthoi klerouchoi* (Scheuble-Reiter 2009).

11.1.1.2 Cavalry

Like in other Hellenistic armies, the cavalry was divided into hipparchies (*hipparchiai*) of 400–500 men each, commanded by a *hipparchos* (or *hipparches*). Each hipparchy was divided into two *ilai*, the first led by an *epilarchos* and the second by an *ilarchos* (or *ilarches*), a junior colleague. Similarly, each *ile* was split into two *lochoi*, headed by an *epilochagos* and a *lochagos*, with *dekanikoi* as sub-officers. In the third century BC, there were five numbered hipparchies (“first hipparchy,” etc.) grouping cavalrymen, each allotted 100 arouras (27.5 ha); after 232 BC, some were allotted only 80 arouras, perhaps to distinguish between heavy and light cavalry. There were further five ethnic hipparchies, probably lightly armed, whose cavalrymen received 70-aroura plots, with the following names: “of the Macedonians, Thracians, Mysians, Persians, or Thessalians.” The ethnic hipparchies were no longer attested after the 170s, while the numbered hipparchies increased to 10, suggesting a uniformization of the system (see also Scheuble-Reiter 2012). In addition to the cavalry-cleruchs, usually called *katoikoi* or *katoikoi hippeis* from the second century on, there were mercenary cavalrymen (*misthophoroi hippeis*), paid in wages and rations.

11.1.1.3 Elite Troops and Elephants

Like other Hellenistic armies, the Ptolemies had a cavalry of the guard and an *agema* (“corps”) containing 3000 infantrymen and some cavalrymen (Polybius 5.65.5). Additionally, there were many different troops that formed the royal guard, such as saber-bearers (*machairophoroi*) and spear-bearers (*lonchophoroi*). From Ptolemy I down to Ptolemy IV, there were also elephants in the army.

Although Egyptians were to become part of the army, and although some Egyptian soldier categories survived (the “men of Philae” etc. at Egypt’s southern border), the Ptolemaic army organization broke with the Egyptian past. Demotic texts either create new names for the Ptolemaic soldiers’ categories or simply transliterate them (e.g. the *misthophoros*-category is translated as *rmt-ꜥw=f-ꜥp-hbs*, “man-receiving-pay”; *katoikos* as *nb-ꜥq*, “master of an income” (i.e. of a plot of land); *stratiotes* as *srty3s*; *katoikos* as *g3tks*, and *hipparches* as *hꜥprgs*; see Clarysse 1987; Scheuble-Reiter 2012, pp. 349–350) (see Table 11.1).

Table 11.1 Army organization in Ptolemaic Egypt.

	<i>Cavalry</i>		<i>Infantry</i>	
	<i>Title</i>	<i>Grant/salary</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Grant/salary</i>
Cleruchs (receiving a <i>kleros</i> or land grant)	3rd cent. BC: <i>Klerouchos</i>	Land grant: 100, 80, or 70 arouras	3rd cent. BC: <i>Klerouchoi</i>	Land grant: 25 or 30 arouras
	2nd–1st cent. BC: <i>Katoikos (hippeus) = rmt</i> <i>lτρ nb-q</i> (cavalryman, master of an income, i.e. a grant)	Land grant: 10–100 arouras	2nd–1st cent. BC: <i>Katoikos = nb-q</i> (master of an income = grant)	Land grant: 25 or 30 arouras
	2nd–1st cent. BC: <i>Machimos hippeus</i> (often Egyptians)	Land grant: 20 or 30 arouras	<i>Machimos</i> or simply <i>andres = rmt</i> (men) (often Egyptians)	Land grant: 5, 7, or 10 arouras
<i>Misthophoroi</i> (receiving <i>misthos</i> or pay)	<i>Misthophoros hippeus</i>	Wage and ration	<i>Misthophoros</i> (or <i>xenos</i>) = <i>rmt-iw</i> = <i>f-sp-hbs</i> (man- receiving-pay)	Wage and wheat ration
Cleruchic <i>misthophoroi</i>		Both land grant and wage		–

11.1.2 *Distribution and Function*

In the third century BC, garrisons were established all along the Eastern Mediterranean coast and on Cyprus, Crete, and some Aegean islands, to protect the empire against attacks by rivals and pirates and to maintain Ptolemaic control. The Ptolemaic fleet played an essential role in maintaining and at times expanding the empire, and counted up to 336 warships under Ptolemy II (Athenaeus 5.203d; Van't Dack and Hauben 1978), among which one-third were quinqueremes and larger ships with sizeable decks for catapults, the largest designed for naval siege warfare (Murray 2012). In time of war, the Ptolemies may have been able to mobilize up to 175 000 men, including c. 70–80 000 in the fleet (Fischer-Bovet 2014, table 3.6).

Within Egypt, the Ptolemies continued to use the system of defense implemented by the Egyptian king Nectanebo I in the 370s BC. The most important garrisons were Pelusium and the new capital Alexandria, then moving south Memphis, Hermopolis, and, in Upper Egypt, Ptolemais, Thebes, and Elephantine (Fischer-Bovet 2014). Army camps were also set up on the Red Sea and in the Eastern Desert for the purpose of elephant-hunting and ivory-trading (Pithom stela), and sometimes garrisons were established within temple precincts (Dietze 2000). After the loss of most external possessions by 197, Pelusium was of key importance in preventing invasions by sea and by land (Carrez-Maratray 1999, pp. 384–393). Finally, it is worthwhile mentioning that Alexandria resisted Antiochus IV's sieges in 169 and 168. Strabo (17.1.7) reminds us that Alexander had made sure the capital's harbor was well fortified, and early fortifications have indeed been excavated (Bagnall and Davoli 2011, p. 107).

In the second century BC, the Ptolemies were able to protect Egypt from foreign invasions through the Delta – except during the Sixth Syrian War – with a moderate number of troops. At the same time, they reorganized their army. In Upper Egypt, new garrisons were established in the 160s south of Thebes in Krokodilopolis, Pathyris, and Latopolis in order to close more efficiently the Nile Valley, to reinforce the garrisons in Philae and Elephantine, and to prevent internal unrest throughout the region (Winnicki 1978).

Indeed, soldiers in garrisons were used not only to defend the territory against foreign invasions but also to project state coercive power within the territory. The most threatening internal problems were large- and medium-scale revolts (Veisse 2004; see Chapter 3). It is not possible to reconstruct in details the role of the army during the revolts, but four strategic elements can be emphasized: first, a large part of the fighting resembled guerilla warfare, with small-scale operations, as Polybius (14.12) indicates with some disdain; second, it was crucial to control the Nile in order to allow the movement of troops and supplies (SB VI 9367; Clarysse 2004); third, temples were the targets of both Ptolemaic and rebel troops, because their precincts could be used as garrisons and they held wealth that could serve to pay troops; and fourth, sieges were essential to regaining control of rebelling cities, such as in Lykopolis in 197 – these required impressive constructions of trenches, fortifications, and dams to block the Nile streams, as described in the Memphis Decree on the Rosetta Stone (OGIS 90.22–27). Another pervasive problem was the mob riots in Alexandria (Polybius 15.25–33; Barry 1993).

11.1.3 *Recruitment Patterns and Integration of Egyptians in the Army*

In the late fourth and third centuries BC, the Ptolemies hired large number of immigrants from the Greek world to serve as mercenaries or cleruchs. Because official documents indicate soldiers' places of origin (or those of their ancestors), historians have used these so-called “ethnic” designations from third-century documents to identify their main provenances, which include Macedonia, Cyrenaica, Judea, Crete, Thessaly, and many Greek cities, particularly Athens. In the second century, the ethnic designations were less systematically employed, except “Persian” and “Macedonian”; these latter referred to the military status of their bearers and no longer to their origin, and therefore had become pseudo-ethnics. In fact, the “Persians” and “Persians of the Epigone” (“of the Descent”) in second-century Pathyris were all Egyptians, employing one denomination or the other depending on whether they were on active service (Persians) or not (Persians of the Epigone) (Vandorpe 2008). This designation probably also gave them access to fiscally privileged categories, such as the tax-Hellenes and the tax-Persians. Even if the financial advantages were limited, these categories represent policies on the part of the Ptolemies to secure the loyalty of population groups whose support was essential. In addition, the king and his family had become central rallying figures, and soldiers expressed their loyalty through dedications of Egyptian temple-building. Some also formed associations of (*philo*)*basilistai* (e.g. I.Th.Sy. 302), which celebrated the figure of the king, notably by organizing local festivals.

The Ptolemies were never reluctant to hire Egyptians in their army: already in 312 BC some belonged to the fighting forces at Gaza (Diodorus Siculus 19.80.4) and others served as light-armed infantry on ships (e.g. Pausanias 1.6.6), but recruitment increased

as Greek immigration decreased. The hiring of 20 000 Egyptians to fight in the Macedonian manner at Raphia in 217 marks the acceleration of the process. Under Ptolemy V, units of *machimoi*, mostly Egyptian infantrymen allotted with *kleroi* of 5, 7, or 10 arouras – 20 in the case of cavalrymen – started to be called *laarchiai*, the best documented being the *laarchia* of Chomenis in Kerkeosiris (Crawford 1971). Ptolemy VI even sent soldiers who bore Egyptian names – whether they were *machimoi* or not – to Crete to help Gortyn against Cnossus (I.Cret. IV 195). *Machimoi* have been considered as members of the lower socioeconomic groups, but most probably were able to climb the social ladder by obtaining land allotments (Fischer-Bovet 2013). Even if their *kleroi* were small, they corresponded to allotment sizes in pharaonic Egypt and were sufficient to support a family, although when *machimoi* were mobilized for a long time in periods of crisis, they suffered more than the *katoikoi*. Egyptians also joined other troops, such as the professional soldiers of the new garrison towns in Upper Egypt, which remained loyal to the king when attacked by rebels. The bilingual family archive of the Cretan cavalry officer Dryton suggests economic and social interaction between the ethnic groups within the professional milieu, including intermarriage of infantrymen with Dryton's daughters (P.Dryton). Egyptians or police officers of Egyptian descent (see later) were sometimes transferred into the *katoikia*, which means that they joined the privileged groups of the *katoikoi hippeis* (whose land allotment nonetheless tended to be smaller in the second century). The presence of Egyptians among the *katoikoi* has generally been downplayed, because soldiers tended to take Greek names upon obtaining this status and are therefore difficult to identify. Yet, the first-century Demotic will of the Egyptian *katoikos* Heti confirms the integration of Egyptians within the army and the growing importance of their role (P.Moscow inv. 123; Malinine 1967 with SB X 10616). *Machimoi* were still serving in 63 BC (BGU VIII 1749–1750) and seem to have been the most active troops in the first century before the arrival of the first Roman troops, the Gabiniani. Studies are still needed concerning the transition to Roman Egypt and the hiring of Ptolemaic soldiers in the Roman army.

11.2 The Police in Ptolemaic Egypt

Police officers and guards reinforced soldiers in maintaining order and ensuring optimal conditions for the daily tasks of the law-enforcement system and the administration. The borders between the military and the police were thus sometimes unclear.

The only systematic monograph on the police in Ptolemaic times – partly available in previous articles – was published by Bauschatz (2013), who suggests that the police system was efficient, rather uncorrupted, and not as centrally controlled as previously thought. Yet, the fragmentary sources make the actual efficiency and level of corruption difficult to evaluate. Hennig (2003) focuses on the security forces that protected borders and caravan routes, while Clarysse and Thompson (2006, 2, pp. 165–177) analyze the fiscal and ethnic status of police officers and guards.

The heads of the police at the nome level were the *epistatai phylakiton* (“police commissioners”). Then came the *archiphylakitai* (“police chiefs”), who answered to civil and other police officials but not, according to Bauschatz, to other *archiphylakitai* higher in

the hierarchy. Finally, there were the *phylakitai* (“police officers,” Demotic *gl-šr.w*, sometimes *rs.w*, “watchmen”) in the villages. Diverse types of guards supplemented the police force or had specific other functions; some may have been part time jobs, in view of the rather low remuneration.

11.2.1 *Function and Recruitment*

One of the *phylakitai*’s main functions was law enforcement. Injured parties addressed petitions to the king or to the nome *strategos*, who then asked *phylakitai* or other law-enforcement officials to provide protection, start an investigation, or seize offenders pending trial (Bauschatz 2007, p. 15, n. 5). Police officers and guards (a *machimos* in PSI IV 353) were responsible for arresting offenders and putting them temporarily in prison, normally under the watch of a prison-guard (*desmophylax*). Guards also had other coercive functions, such as helping with tax collection and tax arrears. The *naukleromachimoi* were probably armed crew members on police ships who also helped protect the transport of taxes or goods. At least from the reign of Ptolemy II, *phylakitai* and *machimoi* served as bodyguards for officials, such as the *sitologos* (SB XXII 15237). Other guard duties included preserving order, protecting towns and villages, and controlling roads (e.g. the *eremophylakes*, “desert guards”; the *potamophylakes*, “river guards”; and the *chomatophylakes*, “dike guards”). Higher up in the hierarchy, the *ephodoi* – often bearing a Greek name, whether they were of Greek or Egyptian origin – supervised tax-farming, ran the postal service, and protected convoys (Hennig 2003; Clarysse and Thompson 2006).

Archiphylakitai mainly bore Greek names (Pros. Ptol. II 4545–4609), which suggests that, initially at least, Greeks held the senior functions – although the possibility that men of Egyptian origin holding such a function used Greek names cannot be completely excluded. The earliest documentation shows that at least *phylakitai* and other guards had Egyptian names and that the Ptolemies recruited locally from the beginning. As their functions were essential to the state, they and their families benefitted from a somewhat privileged fiscal status in the third century BC. Local *phylakitai*’s wages were rather low (6 drachmas a month) (Clarysse and Thompson 2006, 2, p. 172), but they could also be paid in grain and wine. The “men of Philae” (*rmt Pr-ty-lq*), “men of Elephantine” (*rmt Yb*), and “men of Syene” (*rmt Swn*) were some sort of border-guard; at least the first two groups belonged to the fiscally privileged tax-Hellenes, even though they were indigenous people – their denomination eventually acquired an occupational meaning (La’da 2007). Arabs, too, were integrated early on in the police force; teams of Arabs worked with *phylakitai*, and also formed a special fiscal group (Honigman 2002). In the second century, *phylakitai*, *ephodoi*, and *chersephippoi* (desert horsemen attested only in Kerkeosiris) sometimes received land allotments (*phylakitikoi kleroi*), and some were even transferred into the *katoikia*. By integrating police officers in the military sphere and granting them the status of *katoikoi hippeis*, the Ptolemies succeeded in securing their loyalty. Some even adopted a Greek name, like Nechtsaphthis in Kerkeosiris, who started using the name “Maron” (Crawford 1971, p. 63). Local recruitment was more prevalent than in the army, and access to the *katoikia* highlights the preeminent role of Egyptians and Greco-Egyptians in the army and the police.

11.3 The Army of Roman and Late Antique Egypt

Recent studies of the security policy of the Principate have sketched a tripartite system for ensuring public order and defense against external threats in the Roman provinces, characterized by a combination of efforts on imperial, provincial, and communal levels (Brélaz 2005; Fuhrmann 2012). This system involved three elements: first, troops of the Roman army, who could be sent to a threatened province for intervention there; second, soldiers under the command of a governor, whose tasks were to support the governor in administrative matters and to control strategic points in the province; and third, local non-military or civilian officials, who were responsible for maintaining public order within their area of competence. Although this model was developed in studies concerning Asia Minor and the “police tasks” of soldiers in the Roman Empire, it can be applied to Egypt, where we observe the same allocation of tasks – which, in the future, needs to be outlined in a detailed study. The following survey will deal with security measures at the provincial and civilian levels.

The army of Roman Egypt has been well studied (Haensch 2012). The first monograph on this topic was written by Lesquier in 1918 and is still essential, especially concerning the history of the province’s garrison and its involvement in military operations. More recently, Alston’s study (1995) focused on social aspects related to the presence of the army in the province and thoroughly analyzed the lives of veterans who settled in Karanis after their discharge (see, however, the remarks of Bagnall 1997 and Speidel 1997). Due to the distribution of documentary source material, new insights are predominantly restricted to social issues on a local and rural level: papyri illuminate mostly the situation in the Middle Egyptian countryside but remain silent on the Nile Delta, and therefore on Alexandria and the large Lower Egyptian military bases in Nikopolis and Babylon. In this context, one may emphasize the importance of papyrus archives, which provide detailed information on the lives and socioeconomic situations of soldiers and military families (Mitthof 2000; Schubert 2007; Sängner 2011a; see also Chapter 13).

A book on the army of Byzantine Egypt that covers the time span from the reign of Diocletian to the Arabic takeover is still lacking; Maspero (1912) is only concerned with the fifth, sixth, and seventh centuries AD, while Palme (2004, 2007) gives an overview of the development of the army in Byzantine Egypt and of recent scholarly research. The Late Antique papyri offer only scattered information on large-scale phenomena such as troop organization, but open a welcome window into the soldiers’ and officers’ positions in society. Archives, again, stand out in this respect (Palme 2004, pp. 104–106), including the so-called Abinnaeus archive (P.Abinn.), consisting of more than 80 documents of Flavius Abinnaeus, a commander of a camp in the Arsinoite village of Dionysias in the first half of the fourth century (Vandorpe et al. 2015, pp. 138–142; see also Chapter 13).

11.3.1 Organization and Manpower

As in any other Roman province, the commander-in-chief of the troops stationed there was the governor. There is a difference, however, in that the governor of Egypt, the *praefectus Aegypti*, did not belong to the first rank of the two aristocratic classes, namely the senatorial class, but to the lower one, the equestrian order. Octavian, who incorporated

Egypt into the Roman Empire, had ordered that this province should not be governed by men of the senatorial class, in order to avoid their interference. Thus, in Egypt, the legions (the heavy infantry and elite core of the Roman army, whose soldiers were recruited almost exclusively among Roman citizens) were not commanded by senatorial officers – as usual elsewhere – but by equestrians. It was also the equestrian class from which the commanders of the auxiliary units (formed by non-Roman soldiers) were drawn; this was common practice.

According to Strabo (17.1.12), in 25 BC, shortly after Octavian's annexation of Egypt, there were three legions and, on the side of the auxiliary forces, nine infantry (*cohortes*) and three cavalry units (*alae*) stationed in the new province, resulting in a total manpower of about 22 000 soldiers (Speidel 1982; see Table 11.2 and Chapter 4). Before AD 23, the number of legions was reduced to two (Tacitus, *Annales* 4.5): the *legio XXII Deiotariana* and the *legio III Cyrenaica*, garrisoned in Nikopolis near Alexandria. At the beginning of the second century AD, the *legio XXII Deiotariana* is mentioned for the last time, and the *legio III Cyrenaica* moves to the province of Arabia (BGU I 140 of AD 119). From then until the end of the third century, the *legio II Traiana fortis*, which moved to Egypt during the 120s, was the only legion in the province (see Chapter 4). This reduction in

Table 11.2 Troop strength in Roman and Late Antique Egypt.

	<i>Number of soldiers</i>	<i>Legions Camps</i>	<i>Auxiliary units Camps</i>
Augustus	c. 22 000	Three legions, a.o. Legio III Cyrenaica Legio XXII Deiotariana Nikopolis (near Alexandria) Babylon Thebes or Koptos?	9 <i>cohortes</i> 3 <i>alae</i> Southern border, Alexandria, ...
AD 23	c. 16 000	Two legions: Legio III Cyrenaica Legio XXII Deiotariana Nikopolis	Southern border, Thebes, ...
AD 120s	c. 11–12 000	One legion: Legio II Traiana fortis Nikopolis	7 to 10 <i>cohortes/cohortes equitatae</i> 3 or 4 <i>alae</i>
Fourth century AD	c. 30 000	<i>Comitanensis army</i> New province Aegyptus: Legio II Traiana Legio III Diocletiana Nikopolis New province Thebais: Legio II Flavia Constantia Legio I Maximiana New camp in Thebes (Luxor)	<i>Limitanei</i>

the number of legions led to a general decrease in military manpower at the beginning of the second century; thereafter, the 11–12 000 soldiers remained constant until the third century (Alston 1995, p. 31). The legionary soldiers were supported by several auxiliary units: in the second century, for example, the number of *cohortes* fluctuated between seven and eleven, and that of *alae* between three and four (Haensch 2012). Among the *cohortes*, we find *cohortes equitatae*: units composed of both cavalry and infantry. Estimates assume that soldiers of the Roman army represented 0.3% of the entire Egyptian population (Palme 2006b, p. 301).

In Late Antiquity, the organization of the Roman army fundamentally changed as part of the reforms taking place under the reigns of Diocletian (AD 284–305) and Constantine (AD 306–337). Most of the soldiers stationed in Egypt belonged to the so-called *limitanei*, “soldiers in frontier districts” – in contrast to the *comitatenses*, the mobile field army under the command of a *magister militum*. Although the size of the units was reduced, the total number of *limitanei* seems to have been higher than that of the soldiers stationed in Egypt between the first and third centuries, accounting for 0.5–0.8% of Byzantine Egypt’s total inhabitants (Palme 2004, p. 113, 2007, p. 261). Furthermore, the command structure changed: during Diocletian’s reign, Egypt was divided into two provinces (Aegyptus and Thebais), and according to the division between civilian and military spheres of administration, the governors were no longer the commanders-in-chief of the troops stationed in their province. From the end of the third century, they were commanded by a *dux Aegypti*. For the legions in the Thebaid province, a new military camp was built around the Amun temple in Luxor as the base for *legio II Flavia Constantia* and *I Maximiana*, the legions of two of the tetrarchs. After a rebellion in AD 297/8, detachments of the Lower Egyptian legions *II Traiana* and *III Diocletiana* were also stationed there (Speidel 2005).

The command structure was changed again after Egypt became an independent diocese in 381. From 391 on, a *comes limitis Aegypti* is attested, who was responsible for Lower Egypt and its now three provinces (Aegyptus, Arcadia, Augustamnica). Subordinate to him was a *dux Thebaidis*, the commander of the units of Upper Egypt. In the course of the fifth century, the following developments can be observed. First, the *dux Thebaidis* was promoted to a *comes Thebaici*. Second, the competence of the *comes limitis Aegypti* seems to have been extended to the civilian sphere of administration: in the second half of the fifth century, the new title *dux Aegypti* (or *Aegyptiaci limitis*) *et praefectus Augustalis* suggests that the post of the commander-in-chief over the troops stationed in the diocese of Egypt and the function of the head of its civilian administration (the *Augustalis*) were combined – this trend continued after Justinian’s reform of the Egyptian diocese in 539 (Edict XIII; Palme 2007, pp. 247–248).

11.3.2 Distribution and Function

In terms of the tasks of the soldiers serving in Egypt, there are hardly any differences between the Roman and Byzantine Periods. The army had to protect the province from external threats and guarantee its internal security. The first task need not be over-emphasized: during neither the Roman nor the Byzantine Period were the borders of Egypt exposed to severe attacks. Nevertheless, the number of soldiers stationed in the province was in no way negligible – although, as we have seen, in proportion to the entire

Egyptian population, it was quite modest. The disposition of the military forts and smaller outposts leads to the identification of three areas of increased military interest: first, the Nile Delta, with the large military camps at Nikopolis near Alexandria and at Babylon at the southern entry to the Delta, and the well-fortified road from Palestine; second, the southern border region at the first cataract (around Syene and Philae) and advance support bases along the Nile in Northern Aethiopia; third, hubs in the Upper Egyptian Nile Valley and the transport routes connecting them with quarries (e.g. Mons Claudianus) in the Eastern Desert, ports at the Red Sea, and oases in the Western Desert (Alston 1995, pp. 33–38; Palme 2007, pp. 256–259). This disposition makes it clear that in Egypt, the main tasks of the Roman army forces included guarding strategically important points and desert regions in the interior. The deployment in the latter areas could be classified as some kind of border control: desert regions provided refuge areas to nomads and brigands, who occasionally plundered the cultivated land and were, therefore, a threat to the civilian population. Besides the military focal points, further military stations were spread across the country (e.g. in the Fayum). Furthermore, at least during the Roman Period, the major part of the forces (including the provincial fleet, the *classis Alexandrina*) was stationed at Alexandria: second largest city of the Roman Empire, capital of the province, the governor's residence, and a known trouble spot.

Soldiers also fulfilled several “civilian” duties in the context of public works (in Egypt, especially the administration of quarries or mines), tax administration, and the administrative and bureaucratic support of the governor and other Roman magistrates, as well as what could be defined as “police” work, acting as executive organs in the case of judicial inquiries or when state authorities needed access to certain individuals (Palme 2006b). The reason for this multiple use of soldiers lies in the fact that the Roman state had no comparable pool of skilled workers with expertise in administrative and technical matters.

The presence of military personnel in the *chora* is particularly well attested by petitions of civilians addressed to *centuriones*, *decuriones*, and *beneficiarii* in the Roman Period or, for instance, to Flavius Abinnaeus in the fourth century. These members of the army were contacted as local representatives of state authority. In contrast to what some of the petitions might suggest, however, there is no reason to believe that *centuriones*, *decuriones*, or *beneficiarii* officially had judicial competences (Palme 2006b, pp. 318–321; Peachin 2007), and Flavius Abinnaeus (and his superior, the *dux*) had in fact no responsibility over disputes between civilians.

11.3.3 *Recruitment Patterns and Veterans*

Despite the uneven distribution of papyri, it is significant that from the end of the first and through the course of the second century AD, we can observe a concentration of soldiers and veterans in the Arsinoite villages of Karanis and Philadelphia (Alston 1995, pp. 39, 123–126, 158; Schubert 2007, pp. 13–16), although they were still a minority. One explanation of this phenomenon may be that in the first half of the second century, the practice of recruiting Egyptians into the auxiliary units seems to have become common. In the case of the province's fleet, such a procedure probably was established earlier, whereas the recruitment of legionaries from within the province developed to its full extent in the second half of the second century. As the foundation of veteran colonies

is not attested for Egypt and the practice of *missio agraria* (discharge with a land assignment) is to be assumed only in a few cases, the growing proportion of active or retired military personnel in Karanis and Philadelphia seems to have been the result of long-term developments: soldiers returned to their hometown after their discharge or settled in a village attracting veterans, where through the generations, military families evolved, providing an ideal basis for further recruitment (Sänger 2011a, pp. 20–22).

Of course, in Egypt, the recruitment of soldiers was not restricted to villagers. At the beginning of the Roman Period, legionaries especially were recruited (apart from Roman citizens) among individuals with a strongly Hellenized sociocultural background; that is, among Alexandrians and the inhabitants of other Greek towns and the nome capitals (Mitthof 2000, pp. 380–382). In the course of the Roman Period, it is to be expected that the military families that settled near the large military camps (such as Nikopolis and Babylon) also served as an important recruiting source.

Local recruitment remained a common practice in Late Antique Egypt (Palme 2004, pp. 112–113, 2007, p. 262), and the concentrated settlement of soldiers and veterans in certain villages was not restricted to the Roman Period. Although the veteran communities in Karanis and Philadelphia seem to have disappeared at the beginning of the third century AD, the Abinneus archive offers clear evidence for a comparable situation in the fourth century. The papyri provide insights into the lives of the veterans who settled in villages near the cavalry fort built in the Arsinoite village of Dionysias in the reign of Diocletian. The socioeconomic situation of these veterans, who are described as “minor rural middle class” (Banaji 2001, p. 119), is comparable to that of the military personnel attested in Karanis and Philadelphia (Sänger 2011a, p. 30). Their modest prosperity, based on land holdings, savings from active service, and – in the case of legionaries – a retirement bonus, is probably not purely the result of their former profession; rather, it could to a certain extent reflect the requirement profile for recruits to the Roman army, who were expected to have an elevated socioeconomic status (Sänger 2011a, pp. 23–24). That is, soldiers usually did not come from poor families. This could be why the Arsinoite nome was a perfect source for recruits: there, the descendants of the Ptolemaic cleruchs or *katoikoi* offered a suitable pool for future soldiers, from a cultural and socioeconomic point of view (Mitthof 2000, p. 381). But we have to be cautious: recently published archives (P.Vet.Aelii = Sänger 2011a) from the Herakleopolite nome demonstrate that local recruitment in the villages was not restricted to the Arsinoite nome.

11.4 The Civilian Police in Roman and Late Antique Egypt

Neither for the Roman nor for the Byzantine Period are there systematic monographs on the civilian “police” apparatus and the functionality of this branch of administration. Homoth-Kuhs (2005) focuses on the *phylakes* and the *phylakon* tax in the Ptolemaic and Roman Periods, while numerous articles explore the material concerning specific “police” functions. Torallas Tovar (2000) and Sänger (2011b) give an overview of the various police officials.

11.4.1 General Organization

The Roman Empire did not have a professional police apparatus. In Roman Egypt, the highest “police” authorities at the various administrative levels – namely, the *praefectus Aegypti*, the *epistrategos*, and the *strategos* – were anything but “security experts.” They belonged to social circles whose members took up administrative posts (more or less) professionally. Their wide-ranging tasks also included – especially as part of judicial competences – the supervision of the public order.

After the introduction of *boulai* in the nome capitals in AD 200/1, specialized police authorities were developed with responsibility for a whole nome or (from the fourth century on) *civitas*. But again, these officials were not professionals: they came from the ranks of the *bouleutai* and took over police functions in their nome or *civitas* as a liturgical service. The liturgical character of subordinate police officials at the village level was established even earlier (Sängér 2011b).

11.4.2 Officials

We encounter specialized police functions only at the nome and village level. In the Roman Period, the police officials acting at the nome level were subordinate to the *strategos*. This applies to the *epistates phylakiton*, a legacy of the Ptolemaic administration abandoned around the middle of the first century, and to the nome *eirenarches*, introduced before the middle and abolished at the end of the third century as a result of the administrative reforms of Diocletian, the tetrarchs, and Constantine I (Sängér 2005, pp. 147–148, 2011b, pp. 245–247). Whereas the *epistates phylakiton* seems to have been an independent official, receiving petitions and responding to them by charging local officials with the required actions, the *eirenarchai* (ordinarily two per nome) acted only at the direction of the *strategos*. Therefore, the appointment of the *eirenarchai* primary aimed at helping the *strategos*, for whom they organized police actions (e.g. access to persons, seizure of personal property and its return to the lawful owner) by engaging subordinate officials. In the Byzantine Period, a major innovation was the introduction of the *riparius*. Established around the middle of the fourth century, the *riparii* acted as independent police officials responsible for public order in their *civitates*. Usually, two *bouleutai* held the post of *riparius* per *civitas* at that time (Torallas Tovar 2000, pp. 115–117, 119–120).

Specific officials supervising the police organization of urban areas appear in the nome capitals only from the third century onward. Called *nyktostrategoi*, their appearance in the nome capitals is probably also to be connected with the introduction of *boulai* (note that before this measure, they are found in Alexandria and Antinoopolis). Thus, this function was taken over by several *bouleutai* simultaneously. They were subordinate to the *strategoi* and later – in the fourth century – to the *riparii*, watched over the guard personnel of the city, and had competencies in law enforcement, as the petitions addressed to them suggest (Hennig 2002, pp. 288–295; Sängér 2011b, p. 248).

On the lower administrative levels, we encounter a vast number of various police officials. Mention should be made of the *phylakes*, a function that was taken over by “common” people. Acting on the lowest administrative level, *phylakes* were deployed in nome capitals or villages, where they performed the following tasks: guard duties, personal

and object protection, conduct of searches, arrests, detentions, and appearances, as well as transport and courier services (Homoth-Kuhs 2005, pp. 75–81, 135–141). In the villages, *phylakes* could bear more specified titles, such as *nyktophylakes*, *pediophylakes*, and *magdolophylakes*. In the Roman Period, the village *phylakes* were subordinated to an *archephodos* (the highest police official of the village, who received police instructions from higher authorities and had responsibility for their implementation) and an *archiphylax* (Homoth-Kuhs 2005, pp. 94–102). In the first half of the fourth century, the *archephodoi* disappeared; from then until the seventh century, the leading police officials of the villages were called *eirenarchai* (Sänger 2005, pp. 156–170).

11.5 Conclusion

The Ptolemies, and after them the Romans, modified the organization of the army. At least at first, the Ptolemaic army consisted largely of Greek soldiers. In general, it was built on two foundations: the regular army, made up of military settlers; and mercenaries or professional soldiers, who served in garrisons at various strategically significant points. The Imperial and Late Antique Roman army was composed of standing forces alone; there thus existed only one type of soldier: fully professional long-term regulars. However, the recruitment patterns of the Ptolemaic and Roman armies were rather similar: in the course of time, the Ptolemies relied on Egyptians to a greater extent than is usually thought, and the Romans started to refill units stationed in Egypt with local recruits soon after annexation. The Ptolemaic army aimed at protecting the borders of the state, the extent of which varied greatly over time. The stationing of troops outside of Egypt also demonstrates imperialistic ambitions. In Roman times, the aim of the army was mainly to guarantee the internal security of the province and to guard the border zones. The Ptolemies used the army and police forces for many different tasks: military, paramilitary, and economic (e.g. collection of taxes and protection of trade roads). The Romans did not employ professional police officials, but established a liturgical system by which civilian administrative staff and private persons took over police functions for certain periods of time. The designations and tasks of these civilian officials, employed at the whole range of administrative levels (*nomes/civitates*, nome capitals, villages), were manifold; however, there is no question that the soldiers of the Roman army represented the only professional “peacekeepers” within the province. Accordingly, they also undertook policing activities, and had a wide range of “civilian” duties besides.

Important future developments in approaching the Ptolemaic army should stem from two recent studies (Fischer-Bovet 2014; Sekunda 2001). First, methodologically, there is a need for greater collaboration between papyrologists and archeologists, in order to more systematically include archeological and iconographical material, and for a more comparative approach, involving the examination of other Hellenistic armies or the Roman army, or even other premodern armies. Second, more attention needs to be devoted to changes within the period and to reforms. Future research may continue these trends, and should also begin re-evaluating Ptolemaic militaristic achievements and imperialistic aims.

In the case of the Roman army and the Roman civilian policing system, the sources from Egypt should be included to a greater extent into general and comparative studies

on Roman military and security policy, as well as on the tasks and lives of Roman soldiers and veterans. Haensch (2010), Fuhrmann (2012), and Stoll (2015) have recently taken important steps in this direction. On the other hand, analysis of papyrus archives has to be continued, as in the Ptolemaic case, because these provide the best opportunity to discover the life and socioeconomic situation of soldiers and military families (cf. Mitthof 2000; Palme 2004, pp. 104–106; Schubert 2007; Sängler 2011a; Vantorpe et al. 2015, pp. 138–142).

FURTHER READING

Launey (1949) discusses almost every document relating to the Hellenistic armies known in the 1940s, but – as noted in the preface of the new printed edition (1987) – is generally tainted by contemporary racist theories. Scheuble-Reiter (2012) offers an updated and exhaustive discussion of the function and organization of the Ptolemaic cavalry settlers, as well as of their economic and religious activities. Sekunda (2001) analyzes both the textual and the archeological material available in order to evaluate the reform of the Ptolemaic and Seleucid army in terms of organization and equipment in the 160s BC. Van’t Dak (1988) provides a collection of almost all the author’s articles on the Ptolemaic army; its chapter 1 is an essential reflection of the causes and consequences of organizational changes in the Ptolemaic army and the cleruchic system. Bauschatz (2013) provides an up-to-date survey of the papyrological sources on the police of Ptolemaic Egypt, and argues that the hierarchy of police chiefs was accessible, and the police system efficient.

The comprehensive studies of Cuvigny (2003, 2005a), mainly based on the edition of ostraca found in the Eastern Desert, illuminate in detail the military presence in this region of Roman Egypt. Mitthof (2001) offers a detailed and authoritative study on the supply of the Roman army in Late Antique Egypt and gives an overview of the earlier system in the Principate. Two articles by Palme (2006a, 2008) provide an overview of the jurisdiction of military personnel in Roman and Byzantine Egypt.

CHAPTER TWELVE

Immigration, Globalization, and the Impact on Private Law: The Case of Legal Documents

Uri Yiftach and Katelijn Vandorpe

As soon as papyri from Egypt started to be excavated, their merit as a source for the study of legal history was recognized. Many sources of documentary papyri provide legally relevant information: texts of legislative activity and other collections of regulations, court rulings, and court proceedings; accounts, reports, petitions, letters – all provide precious information that cannot be ignored by anyone attempting to understand the operation of law in Greco-Roman Egypt. Among these sources, some record certain spheres of legal activity better than others: criminal law and the law of tort are especially well documented in petitions and court proceedings; administrative law in administrative correspondence and decrees; and law of persons in collections of regulations, administrative correspondence, applications for admission into certain status groups, and other sources (Bauschatz 2013; for a sourcebook with introductions to these types of legal document, see Keenan et al. 2014).

At the same time, it is primarily the law of contract – or, to be more precise, the law of private legal institutions – that is best documented on papyrus: parties recorded their contracts in writing, and were naturally interested in keeping this documentation for future reference. This interest resulted in high numbers of contracts among documentary papyri and in archives. People also referred to contractual activity in letters, petitions, and court proceedings, further extending our acquaintance with this type of legal activity. We will study here this type of *legal document* – meaning, from now on, “all papyri whose purpose of composition was to record a legal act, contractual (loan, lease, etc.) or other (e.g. hereditary dispositions).” We will discuss the legal traditions of the two dominant population groups, Greeks and Egyptians, with due attention to possible interactions and to the minor impact of Roman law. We start with the Greek documentation – the largest group

(4596 texts) – the formulary of which can be followed over more than 900 years; we then continue with the Egyptian legal documentation (1383 texts), which survived only for about 400 years from the time of Alexander’s conquest. The small corpus of Latin legal documents (less than 20 texts) is briefly discussed at the end. The document types marked in bold are summarized in Table 12.1.

Table 12.1 Legal Documents of the *chora* (white background: Ptolemaic, light grey: Roman, dark grey: Byzantine Period)

<i>Document format</i>	<i>Scribe/ Scribal office</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Text type</i>
Greek tradition			
Greek double document	Professional scribe	4 th -1 st cent. BC	Loans, leases, ... No land conveyances, wills
Greek notarial or agoronomic document	Greek public notary or <i>agoranomos</i>	3 rd cent. BC – early 4 th cent. AD	Land conveyances, wills, loans, ...
Autograph document or <i>cheirographon</i>	Private sphere (usually debtor)	Late 2 nd cent. BC - Roman period	All types
<i>Synchoresis</i>	Unknown scribal office near the court of the <i>kriterion</i>	Roman Alexandria	All types
Application or <i>hypomnema</i>	Unertain	Roman Arsinoite nome (disappears between late 2 nd and 4 th cent. AD)	Leases
Private protocol	Uncertain	Roman Oxyrhynchite nome (disappears between late 2 nd and 4 th cent. AD)	Leases
Record of money transfer or <i>diagraphe</i>	Bank	Roman period	Originally money transfer, but then other types of transaction as well
<i>Grapheion</i> document	<i>Grapheion</i> or record office	Roman period (disappears between late 2 nd and 4 th cent. AD)	All types, rarely leases
“New” <i>cheirographon</i>	<i>Tabelliones</i>	Between the 4 th and the 8 th cent. AD	All types
Egyptian tradition			
Temple notarial document	Temple notary	7 th cent. BC - 1 st cent. AD	Land conveyances, wills, loans, leases, ...
Egyptian double document	Professional scribe	3 rd cent. BC	Loans, no land conveyances or wills

Table 12.1 (Continued)

<i>Document format</i>	<i>Scribe/ Scribal office</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Text type</i>
Autograph document in Demotic	Private sphere (usually debtor)	2 nd – 1st cent. BC	Loans,..., no land conveyances or wills
In Coptic		Shortly before and after Arab conquest	Loans, leases
Roman tradition			
<i>Diptychon</i> or <i>triptychon</i> (booklet of wax tablets or papyrus)	Official bureau	2 nd -3 rd cent. AD	Wills, manumissions of slaves and marriage contracts

12.1 Regionalism and Diachronic Change in Greek Legal Documents

12.1.1 *Random Findings and Diachronic Changes*

Greek legal documents were – like their Egyptian counterparts – commonly composed following a set scheme of recurring clauses, displaying regional and chronological phrasing variants that – unlike their Egyptian counterparts – go beyond Egypt’s borders. The issue of the regional factor bears upon a fundamental theme that has preoccupied Greek legal historians over the last 50 years: the unity of Greek law (a useful overview can be found in Canevaro and Harris n.d.). The proponents of the unity of law emphasize the common terminology and legal concepts found in any corner of the Greek world, be it in the Archaic, Classical, Hellenistic, or Roman Period: the word *bebaiosis* (legal warranty; for its use in the papyri, see Rupprecht 1982), for example, conveys roughly the same notion whether used in Massilia, Syracusae, Athens, or Antiochia. Thus, one can speak of “the Greek law of sale” (Pringsheim 1950), “the Greek law of surety” (Partsch 1909), and so forth. Opponents of this view stress the diversity among the many thousands of *poleis* with regard to institutions, the contents of individual regulations, and the procedures by which damages are remedied (Finley 1951, pp. 82–85).

Egypt should a priori make an easier case. From its conquest by Alexander in 332 BC through the Arab conquest, it forms a single political entity. Regional autonomy, including legislative autonomy, may be assumed only in the case of the Greek *poleis* (Fraser 1972, pp. 109–113), which, prior to AD 200/1 (see Chapter 8), are quite few in number and – with the exception to some extent of Alexandria – not well documented. Even after that date, legislative activity is not well attested in the context of the newly established *metropoleis*. Most inhabitants of Egypt lived outside the framework of the *polis* or *metropolis*, and were officially subject to a single corpus of laws and decrees (Mélèze Modrzejewski 1966). So, in the particular case of this corner of the Greco-Roman world, the main incentive to deny the unity of Greek law does not seem to obtain. Nonetheless, things are not so simple as that.

Positive legislation focused in Egypt on a rather limited sphere of activity: in both the Ptolemaic and the Roman Periods, we note a particular interest in regulating the sale of landed property and slaves, in the execution of debt and forms of foreclosure, and in the archivation and shape of legal documents; in the Roman Period alone, we also find an interest in questions of status (Mélèze Modrzejewski 1966, pp. 128–129; Wolff 2002, pp. 51–54; Yiftach n.d.–b).

The different schemes found in contracts throughout Egypt had a bearing on their contents: for example, land leases from the Oxyrhynchite nome allow the lessor to control the fruits of the estate until the payment of the rent and other related payments are settled (e.g. P.Fouad. I 43.34–36, AD 189/90; Phobou and Kränzlein 1974). As the same formulation does not appear in contemporary documentation from the Arsinoite nome, does this mean that the Arsinoite lessor could not apply the same right of control? Alternatively, was the right in the Arsinoites anchored in unwritten practice, or in some other source of law (Yiftach n.d.–b)? Let us put the question in broader terms: since a document played a crucial role in the shaping of the institution it documented, and since the contents of a document frequently varied by place and by date, should we speak not of the law of the papyri, but rather of the law of Roman Oxyrhynchos, Arsinoites, Byzantine Aphrodito, and so on? In a sense, we are back to the question of the unity of Greek law.

The following sections are not meant to answer this or similar questions. Rather, the reader should view them as an introduction that raises key problems and proposes some methodological approaches. The reader will encounter frequent reference to “the survey.” This is the project *Synallagma: Greek Contract in Context*, launched in 2007 under the auspices of the Israel Scientific Foundation (Synallagma online). This chapter focuses on the findings, formats, clauses, and usage patterns of legal documents in private and public archives.

The survey presented here relates to 4596 Greek legal documents on papyrus and ostraca found in Egypt. The amount of data is beyond any comparison to what is found elsewhere in the Greek and Roman world. At the same time, the evidence has its limits, which seems to affect especially a survey of the question of formulaic continuity, namely the attempt to study regional diversities and diachronic changes in the structure and content of legal documents. The finding is random, and depends on climatic conditions, modes of preservation, and the secondary use of the papyri, as well as on the circumstances of their excavation and the identity of those undertaking it (clandestine versus authorized). In this section, the question of preservation is discussed. We shall start with a regional survey, and then address the diachronic one (Yiftach n.d.–b).

The northernmost part of Egypt, including the city of Alexandria and the Nile Delta, down to the Memphite nome, yields just a tiny proportion of the documentation surveyed here. The number of legal documents is 103 (around 3% of the total), which predominately stem from the city of Alexandria. These were not found in their place of composition, but were removed in Antiquity to other places: the most yielding finding is that of legal documents preserved in the office of the Alexandrian *kriterion* (tribunal) in the early days of Augustus, reused as mummy cartonnage in the necropolis of the village of Bousiris, in the northern part of the Herakleopolite nome (BGU IV, cf. Schubart 1913, pp. 36–37; for other examples, see e.g. the labor contract P.Oxy. IV 727, from Roman Alexandria, but found in Oxyrhynchos).

The southernmost part of the land, extending from the Kynopolite nome to Elephantine and Syene, is better documented, yielding about 10% of the total. Here, we do possess documentation that was found in situ, such as one of the oldest documentary papyri, a marriage document stemming from 310 BC Elephantine (P.Eleph. 1); it was discovered by O. Rubensohn in situ, along with other roughly contemporaneous legal texts. The family archives from Pathyris, left there after the destruction of the outpost in 88 BC, contain a substantial 126 legal documents. Finally, some 110 legal documents dating to the sixth century AD are preserved in the archive of Dioskoros of Aphrodito (see Chapter 25). At the same time, besides their joint administrative affiliation, the three locations have little in common, and are so geographically and chronologically far apart that they can hardly provide any comprehensive picture of regional diversities in legal documents from Upper Egypt.

In between lies the region that yields the vast majority of our texts: the Fayum, the ancient Arsinoite nome, with as many as 2423 legal documents – more than 50% of the total. Here too lie the Oxyrhynchite (961 legal documents) and Hermopolite nomes (659 legal documents). Within these three nomes, however, not all locations are equally well documented. In the Oxyrhynchites, for example, we have some early Ptolemaic findings from the northern villages, in particular Tholthis' double documents. But then, from the first century AD through the Byzantine Period, the corpus of legal documents stems almost entirely from the nome's capital, the city of Oxyrhynchos itself. A similar picture is provided by the source material from the Hermopolite nome. In the Arsinoites, a much broader range of locations is represented: the 2423 documents found here were drafted in no less than 73 different locations, but most of these yield very little evidence: the village of Tebetny, for example, in the Polemon district, gives just one sale, dating to the fourth century AD (P.Münch. III 86). In fact, just six locations, providing more than 20 documents each, qualify as the object of independent diachronic analysis: Tebtynis (316); the capital Krokodilopolis, later known as Ptolemais Euergetis and then as Arsinoiton Polis (278); and the villages of Soknopaiou Nesos (160), Philadelpheia (111), Karanis (91), and Theadelpheia (68).

Many of the Ptolemaic findings, especially in Middle Egypt, are due to the reuse of the documents in mummy cartonnage. The origins of the papyri are most likely public offices. As such, cartonnage papyri contain quite a high proportion of administrative correspondence, reports, and accounts (Bagnall 1995, pp. 20–21; Yiftach n.d.–b). Fortunately, some of the material comes from archives that also preserve legal documents. Five main archives consist entirely of such documents: double documents from 223/2 BC Tebtynis (P.Tebt. III 815); a collection of abstracts mostly from 232 or 206 BC Thegonis (CPR XVIII); two collections of wills from 238/7 and 226/5 BC Krokodilopolis (P.Petr.² I); collections of double documents from the northern Oxyrhynchite nome, concentrating primarily around the village of Tholthis (primarily BGU VI, X, and XIV); and a mutilated collection of documents from 178/7 BC Philadelpheia (P.Freib. III) (see, in general, Rupprecht 1995). To these collections, all focusing on the documentation of contracts, collections of petitions should be added (e.g. P.Enteux.; P.Diosk.Phroure.; P.Polit.), as well as collections of abstracts of Demotic documents (P.Hawara; P.Trophitis). In many cases, the archives tend to be homogeneous, or at least to show preference toward the documentation of certain types of contract, and to contain documents composed in an extremely

narrow time span. Since, in many cases, the recycled archives provide all or most of our Ptolemaic evidence, the pattern of preservation of legal documents is extremely uneven: for example, thanks to the findings of P.Petrie² I, we are well informed on the structure and contents of wills in late third-century BC Arsinoites, but material from the following centuries is extremely sparse, becoming abundant again only in the Early Roman Period. Leases come down to us, in very substantial numbers, in the documentation from Tholthis and its surroundings, but are relatively poorly attested for the remaining Ptolemaic Period.

In the Early Roman Period, the source material derives almost exclusively from Middle Egypt. The source material from the Oxyrhynchites and Hermopolites concentrates in the nomes' capitals, and continuously increases in number as we approach the third and fourth centuries. The preservation patterns in the Arsinoites are more complex. In the first half of the first century, more than three-quarters of the Arsinoite documentation derives from two villages: Tebtynis (64 documents) and Soknopaiou Nesos (32 documents). Taking the century as a whole, the proportion of the finding from these two villages drops somewhat, but still remains significantly high at 87 and 64 documents, respectively, out of a total of 249. The same picture can be drawn from the majority of the Arsinoite findings of the second century, although other locations now become increasingly important: Philadelpheia gives 31 documents, Theadelpheia 33, Karanis 35, and the nome's capital, Ptolemais Euergetis, 69. Then, in the third century, Tebtynis and Soknopaiou Nesos decline: most of the documentation now derives from the "northern axis" of Philadelpheia, Karanis, Theadelpheia, and, in particular, Ptolemaic Euergetis. The last significant group of Arsinoite sources stems from the sixth century AD, and was authored almost entirely in the nome's capital. In this respect, the Arsinoites catches up with what is now the prevailing pattern throughout Egypt: legal documents derive exclusively from the *metropoleis*.

The results of our analysis call for caution. Egypt yields the greatest source of legal documents from the ancient world, but no one location provides an uninterrupted flow of sources. A "formulaic history" of the country in its entirety, never mind of the Greek East, can only be constructed on the basis of test cases, with due attention to legal documents stemming from other, less well documented regions and related material.

12.1.2 *Formats, Scribes, and Usage Patterns: From Multiplicity to Unity*

This section discusses the connection between the nature of the transactions recorded and the format used to record them (the terminology is based on Wolff 1978, pp. 57–127; for a general overview with texts in translation, see Keenan et al. 2014, section 2.1).

The earliest type of document in use by the Greek population of Egypt (attested already in the late fourth century BC; P.Eleph. 1) was the **double document**, redacted by a professional scribe: the same text was written twice, then the upper text (or *scriptura interior*) was sealed and the lower part (or *scriptura exterior*) was kept open to be consulted at any time; the document was kept by one of the six witnesses who attended the legal act, termed for that purpose a "keeper of contracts" or *syngraphophylax* (Yiftach-Firanko 2008a, pp. 208–209; for seals on double documents, see Vandorpe 1997). The double document was initially a success, and was even used for Egyptian contracts for some time (see later). But it ceased to exist in Egypt after the Roman conquest. In addition,

already in the third century BC, an office was founded by the government that was meant to supervise and record land conveyances (Pestman 1978; Wolff 1978, pp. 11–12, 189–190). This notarial office, which in the context of the *chora* is called an *agoranomeion*, also composed other types of legal document. It was active down to the beginning of the fourth century AD.

By the end of the second century BC, another format was added: the **autograph document** in letter format, termed *cheir* or *cheirographon* in Greek, which was meant to be written by the debtor in person, without the involvement of an identifiable professional scribe or notary (compare the Egyptian version, discussed later) (Vandorpe 2013a; Wolff 1978, pp. 106–110; Yiftach-Firanko 2013, pp. 22–27). The *cheirographon* endured throughout the Roman Period, and prevailed, considerably modified, in Late Antiquity as the default format for the documentation of legal acts by the newly introduced scribal office of the *tabelliones* (Kovarik 2013, pp. 201–205; Yiftach-Firanko 2008b, pp. 338–339). Moving into the Roman Period, we count the *synchoresis*, “deed of concession,” already in use in Alexandria in the days of Augustus and still dominant in the documentation from that city in later periods; the *hypomnema*, “application,” adopted for the recording of leases and other land agriculture-related transactions, primarily in the Arsinoite nome; and the **private protocol**, used for the same purpose in the contemporary Oxyrhynchites (Wolff 1978, pp. 91–95, 114–127; Yiftach-Firanko 2007). Banks, documenting their financial activities, began in the second century AD to act as scribal offices as well. Documents yielded by banks were termed *diagraphe* (literary “records of money transfer”). Yet, the best recorded type of document of this period is the **grapheion document**, well attested primarily in the Arsinoite source material of the first two centuries AD. The *Synallagma* project currently records 646 *grapheion* documents from the Early Roman Period (earliest attestation: PSI IX 1028, AD 15, Tebtynis) (Wolff 1978, pp. 86–91; Yiftach-Firanko 2014a, pp. 41–53). Eventually, the **new cheirographon** would replace some of the older document types in later Roman times (Kovarik 2013).

No less than eight distinct formats existed for the documentation of legal acts in the Greek sphere (versus three formats in the Egyptian). It is intriguing to know to what extent these formats focused each on a different sphere of contractual activity. Our survey starts with the early Ptolemaic double document. The double documents of the “Tholthis group” (Oxyrhynchite village, 57 documents) most commonly record land leases (32 documents), followed by loans (19 documents), and one dowry receipt: no hereditary dispositions are extant. Five documents relate to land sales, but these do not record the conveyance of title itself, but rather the payment of the consideration, and can thus not be labeled sale contracts (e.g. BGU XIV 2399.28–31; Yiftach-Firanko 2014b, pp. 314–318).

Similar patterns are conveyed by other groups of double documents. The “Theogonis group” (Arsinoite village, 23 documents; CPR XVIII) has eight leases, seven dowry receipts, four notes of credit, one text relating to a wine sale, and one text recording a “cession” or *parachoresis* of the implements of a vineyard. In the case of two sale contracts relating to land, the documents do not record the act itself, but just the payment of the consideration. The act would later have been discharged through the public scribe (*demosion*) in the *metropolis* (see also the abstracts of double documents recorded in P.Tebt. III 815) (cf. Yiftach 1999, p. 147; Yiftach-Firanko 2014b, p. 166). The pattern is

clear: double documents, where preserved, focus primarily on leases, labor contracts, dowry receipts, loans, and the sale of fungibles; they do not record land sales or, as far as we can tell, hereditary dispositions. At least for the former type of act, the office where it was to be discharged was that of the public scribe or the *agoranomeion*.

No closed group of **agoranomic documents** comes down to us from Middle Egypt (we do not consider P.Freib. III notarial documents), but the source material from the Pathyrite nome (Upper Egypt) fits the preceding picture surprisingly. Among the 122 Greek notarial documents, as many as 86 record the *katagraphe* – the act of conveyance of the title, performed before the Greek notary or *agoranomos* – while 28 documents record loans, five are wills, and one is a marriage document. Leases, on the other hand – the most commonplace type among the double documents – are almost completely absent. Few Greek legal documents in letter format, and no Greek double documents, are found among Pathyris' papyri, but one must not forget that the community was mainly inhabited by (partly Hellenized) Egyptians, who, for their informal documents, preferred their native language and script (Demotic); leases, on the other hand, which are likewise absent from the Greek notarial documentation, are quite common among Egyptian temple contracts (Vandorpe and Waebens 2010a, pp. 87–89).

A new type of documentation, added to the *agoranomos*' sphere of activities by the first century BC, relates to allotment land (*kleros katoikikos*). Land allotted by the king to its military settlers (see Chapter 11), which was originally unalienable, became conveyable in the first century BC (Scheuble-Reiter 2012, pp. 164–165; Yiftach 2015a, p. 136), and the *agoranomos* assumed the responsibility of certifying the consent of the land's current holder to the act of conveyance, and was also entrusted with the responsibility of supervising conveyance of title to slaves. The three functions – conveyance of regular private land, of allotment land, and of slaves – make a major sphere of activity of the *agoranomos* in the Roman Period: 38 of the 68 documents issued at the *agoranomeion* of the city of Oxyrhynchos record sales either of slaves (12) or of landed property (26). The same office is also preoccupied with the composition of wills and marriage documents, while the number of leases (3) and labor contracts (2) is proportionally small. Similar figures are attested for the *agoranomeia* of the Arsinoite, Hermopolite, and Herakleopolite nomes.

Let us now return to the double document. The Ptolemaic state showed, throughout its existence, much interest in regulating the shape and contents of legal documents. This interest resulted, among other things, in the systematic collection of documents and the preparation of abstracts of their contents: the previously mentioned closed groups of double documents (i.e. “the Tholthis group” and the “Thegonis group”) are the fruits of this effort (Rupprecht 1995, pp. 37–43). The same effort manifested itself in the subsection in the second century BC of different types of privately composed documents to registration by a special “record office,” duly named the *grapheion* (Depauw 2011, pp. 193–196; Yiftach-Firanko 2008a, pp. 214–215). The *grapheion* was in charge of registering documents in both Greek and Demotic (see later), adding a note of registration on the document itself, and sometimes affixing one or more red stamps. In the case of the double document, the account of the registration replaced the formerly complete inner text of the document in around 130 BC, and finally brought about its complete abandonment at the beginning of the Roman Period. The result was the birth of a new type of document: the *grapheion*-document, which constitutes the largest group of legal documents

found in early Roman Egypt – partly due to the exceptionally rich findings at the *grapheion* offices in the Fayum villages of Tebtynis and Soknopaiou Nesos. All types of document could be (and frequently were) composed at this scribal bureau.

At the same time, an interesting pattern emerges: sale contracts, especially those recording the sale of houses and landed property, as well as contracts recording loans and deposits, are by far the most common document types: in the first two centuries AD combined, they make up 203 and 152 documents, respectively, out of a total of 513. Dowry receipts and hereditary dispositions are, as to be expected, less common (37 and 32 documents respectively), but what is perhaps surprising is the relative rarity of lease contracts: this type of contract, which made up the lion's share of the transactions recorded in the groups of Ptolemaic double documents examined before, forms just 13% of the total. A similar pattern is manifested for the letter format or *cheirophaphon*. The paucity of leases among both the *grapheion* contracts and the *cheirophapha* can be accounted for by the introduction, in the early first century AD, of an alternative method of documenting leases. From then on, lease contracts regularly take the form of the *hypomnema*, an “application” by the prospective lessee to the landowner or manager for the lease of the object of the contract (the prospective lessee declares, “I wish to lease X”). While the *hypomnema* per se seems to be a form of documentation initially unique to the Arsinoite nome, the assignment of leases to a particular type of contract is evident in other nomes also: in the Oxyrhynchites, lease contracts take the format of the private protocol, an objective account of the act of lease (“A has leased out to B, etc.”).

The preceding account gives an impression of a pretty rationalized system. Different forms of document are assigned to different scribes: Ptolemaic and Roman land and slave conveyances and hereditary dispositions are regularly documented at the *agoranomeia*, and Roman land sales and hereditary dispositions fall to the share of the *grapheion*. Leases are commonly documented in the Ptolemaic Period in double documents, whereas in the Roman Period they are eventually documented in the Arsinoites in the format of the *hypomnema*, and in the Oxyrhynchites in the format of the private protocol. How can we account for this pattern?

No text comes down to us that defines the sphere of competences of each individual scribe, and one should not think that such a detailed regulation ever existed. At the same time, the interest of the royal and then the provincial administration in monitoring legal activity is amply documented. Two regulations seem particularly relevant. BGU VI 1214 (185–165 BC, Arsinoites) aims at regulating the appointment procedure of Egyptian scribes and their fees for the composition of legal documents, at two different rates: one for deeds of sale and of cession, another for the rest. Thus, BGU VI 1214 draws the conceptual distinction that guided the respective spheres of activity of scribes in both Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt (Yiftach 2015b, pp. 165–166). The second document is a law of the city of Alexandria (P.Hal. 1.241–259) that prescribes, alongside the payment of the conveyance tax, the registration of the act by the city magistrates (*tamiai*) as a prerequisite for the validity of the conveyance (Wolff 1978, pp. 188–189; Yiftach-Firanko 2014b, pp. 318–319). The validity of a similar rule in the *chora* needs to be proven rather than a priori assumed, but there is good evidence for its existence.

The only direct parallel to the Alexandrian law of sale is evident within the *Gnomon of the Idios Logos* (BGU V 1210), a mid-second-century AD compilation of rules regulating

the conduct of the *idios logos*, with detailed account of hereditary questions: a specific provision invalidates Greek wills that were not documented in a public instrument (*demosios chrematismos*, BGU V 1210.33-34). While such a rule was not introduced, in all probability, for other types of *Greek* instruments, a similar policy may be hallmarked in rules relating to the registration of titles to landed property, and possibly slaves, in the “acquisition archive” (*bibliotheke enkteseon*) – an archive founded for this purpose as an independent institution in the early AD 70s (Jördens 2010; Wolff 1978, pp. 48–51). The title would be registered as permanent only if the property was conveyed by a vendor whose own title was acquired by means of a public instrument, and provided that the current conveyance was documented in the said type of instrument. There was no prohibition on recording conveyance through a different instrument, but the fact that such conveyance would not be registered as permanent made it unrewarding (Yiftach-Firanko 2010b, pp. 298–299).

The previously mentioned order was gradually abandoned between the late second and the fourth centuries AD. In its earliest stage, the degeneration process was brought about by the introduction of the new *cheirophon* – an instrument that was not qualified to register titles that could be registered in the “acquisition archive”. The *cheirophon* became default means for the documentation of land sales in the Oxyrhynchite nome (Yiftach-Firanko 2008b). Around the same time, all *graphia* in the Arsinoites were shut down, besides that at the nome’s capital. This change culminated in the demise of most types of documentation at the beginning of the fourth century (Kovarík 2013). Two types of document did survive the transformation: the *hypomnema*, which was now employed throughout Egypt for the documentation of leases and related transactions, and the *cheirophon*, which became the default format for the documentation of legal acts by the newly introduced scribe of the *tabellio*. Most of the 979 surveyed documents that date to the fifth through the eighth centuries AD – sale and loan contracts, marriage contracts, and labor contracts, as well as leases beginning in the sixth century – are in fact “reformed” or “new” *cheirophona*. When the Greek domination of Egypt came to an end, the “new” *cheirophon* was predominant everywhere for all types of transaction: the multipartite (Ptolemaic and Roman Period) and bipartite (Early Byzantine Period) division of scribal activity had disappeared.

12.1.3 Document Shape

The application of different text shapes to document transactions by different scribes, and even the application of different formats at the same scribal bureau for different types of transactions, is evident throughout the history of Greek documentation in Egypt (Yiftach 2015b). The format of the double document, the default type of documentation at least among private persons in the Ptolemaic *chora*, tends to be relatively wide, each line counting about 50–70 letters, or sometimes more. At the same time, narrower formats are applied in different types of third-century BC documents and in the format of the *cheirophon* of the late second century BC. Still in the Ptolemaic Period, we note the application of different formats in the same bureau: the *agoranomoi* of Pathyris thus tend to apply a wide format for land conveyances (in combination with a comprehensive dating formula), whereas for other document types such as loans, they tend to apply a narrow format (in combination with a compact dating protocol; P.Dryton, pp. 106–107;

e.g. the loan P.Adler 10: 30–35 letters a line, versus the land conveyance P.Adler 9: 75–85 letters a line; Wolff 1948, p. 26). A similar variety is already found in Demotic temple contracts in the seventh century BC (see later).

While the formats of the Greek counterparts may have been inspired by native traditions, one may consider another, economic explanation: in the context of the late Ptolemaic *agoranomeia*, wide-format documents were composed in anticipation of additional text, in particular the confirmation of the payment of the conveyance tax by the public bank, and for that purpose provide, in advance, a pretty spacious margin beneath the body of the act of conveyance. By contrast, such a wide margin is not considered necessary in other types of transaction. This question requires further investigation (Depauw 2013, pp. 156–158).

For the Roman Period, we note a clear distinction in format between the *hypomnemata* and the “private protocols”: both documents recording leases and other contracts of agricultural implication, on the one hand (e.g. BGU II 407, a *hypomnema* with 15–20 letters a line; P.Kell. I 33, a private protocol with 15–20 letters), and those used for documenting land conveyances and other types of contract with long-term consequences, on the other (e.g. P.Louvre I 9, a *grapheion* bilingual act of sale with 140–150 letters a line; P.Oxy. III 492, an agoranomic will with 160–170 letters). This distinction also has a bearing on production costs. We are fortunate to have lists of documents composed within a set time frame in the *grapheion* of Tebtynis. Within these lists, dating to the fourth year of the emperor Claudius (AD 46/7), we frequently encounter an account of the *grammatikon*: the fee paid to the scribe for the production of the document. When we compare contracts that are known to be of narrow format with those of wider format, we note a clear price gap. For the first group, the charge would be something between a very few obols and 2 or 3 drachmas, for the latter as many as 8 or 10 drachmas, or even more: four times the fee charged for the narrow format (Yiftach 2015b, p. 170).

One should not aim at rationalizing the system at any cost. After all, some scribes may have simply applied a certain format as their own “trademark,” or applied many formats to make a clear distinction between different types of document drawn up in their bureau. But if an economic explanation is sought, one may note the application of the wider format for transactions that are relatively rare and economically more significant, and the narrower for those that are commonly undertaken (Yiftach 2015b, pp. 169–170). The working hypothesis proposed with regard to the Ptolemaic Period is applicable in this case as well.

As we approach the Byzantine Period, the “new” *cheirographon* becomes the default format for transactions. Its format exhibits wide variation, with an accumulation of items measuring between 30 and 60 lines a piece. But there are also wider and narrower texts within this group. A high proportion of land sales is found among the wider documents, but some land-sale contracts feature narrower formats as well, so that no decisive recognition can be reached at this stage (Synallagma online).

12.1.4 Contents and Formulary

As to the contents, only two elements appear in every legal document from all periods: the date clause, which in some cases also reports the document’s place of composition and composing notary, and the act that set the contract in motion; the latter clause also

specifies the contract's nature as lease, sale, loan, and so forth. Some other clauses become quite widespread in certain periods and formats. In third-century BC Egypt, if not earlier, parties to Greek contracts sometimes add a confirmation of the terms in their own handwriting (*hypographe* or "subscription") (Yiftach 2016). This finally becomes obligatory in the case of the double document around 180 BC (e.g. P.Tebt. III 818, 174 BC; Wolff 1978, pp. 164–166). The *hypographe* is also indispensable in the *grapheion* document at the beginning of the Roman Period, but it is surprisingly common in all other types of format too – even in the *cheirophonon*, where the body of the document, in theory written by the contracting party in person, should have made it redundant (e.g. BGU XI 2112, first century AD, Arsinoites). The *hypographe* of the parties, as well as the attending witnesses, is also indispensable in the Byzantine "new" *cheirophonon*.

The Roman act of *stipulatio* (one party asking the other to be willing to undertake an obligation, with the latter's consent turning the obligation effective) is inserted into contracts after the grant of Roman citizenship to the entire population of the empire in AD 212 (Wolff 2002, pp. 131–133). From AD 219 onward, this *stipulatio* clause becomes a routine element, applied in every type of legal document, anywhere in Egypt (Pringsheim 1961, p. 238). Other types of clause seem common in specific types of format or contract. The *kyria* clause ("This contract shall be valid wherever produced by ..."), stating the validity or the applicability of the document in any court of law to which it is presented (Mélèze Modrzejewski 1984, p. 1180–1184; Wolff 1978, pp. 154–162), seems to be widespread in the Ptolemaic double documents; in the Roman Period, it is remarkably rare in *grapheion* documents, and practically absent in other, less well attested formats, but seems routinely applied in the early Roman *cheirophonon* and "private protocol," as well as in the Byzantine *hypomnema* and "new" *cheirophonon*.

Many types of contract contain information on the scribe who composed the document, the office that was entrusted with its safekeeping, or the person who undertook its registration. Double documents, for instance, always mention the *syngraphophylax*, the private person entrusted with their safekeeping. Later, in the late second century BC, they also record the *anagraphe*, the act of registration of the contract in the files of the *grapheion*. This is also the case with the late Roman *tabelliones* documents, for which such an account was obligatory (Kovarík 2013). The same information is usually omitted, on the other hand, in the *cheirophonon*, *hypomnema*, *synchorexis*, and private protocols: in these documents, which make up more than one-third of our findings from the first three centuries of the Roman Period (977 out of 2580), we have to rely on circumstantial evidence in order to identify the scribe. Such an attempt has not been undertaken so far.

Besides these routine, universal clauses, scribes would also be inclined to employ similar clauses – or groups of clauses – in different types of contracts, if the contractual circumstances shared some common features. The most outstanding instance is that of the *praxis* clause: "Party X (the creditor) having the right of execution upon Party Y (the debtor) and all his property as if in accordance with a legal decision" (Rubinstein 2010; Rupprecht 1967, pp. 104–107; Wolff 1941) – if the document recorded a future obligation, it also defined the means at the creditor's disposal to exact a default debt; this is invariably the case in loan contracts and sales on future delivery, marriage contracts, and occasionally also leases and labor contracts. In the same manner, if the contract recorded a conveyance of title to a piece of property, the document would incorporate a cluster of clauses

professing that the asset was surrendered not subject to liabilities (“the surrender clause”), enumerating the capacities of the conveyee toward the conveyed object (“the capacity clause”), prohibiting the conveyor from introducing an unlawful charge for the recovery of the object (“the non-suit clause”), and, most importantly, obligating the conveyor to defend the title of the conveyee against any claim by a third person (“the *bebaisios* clause”) (e.g. P.Mich. X 583.13-22, AD 78; Pringsheim 1950, e.g. pp. 317–318; Rupprecht 1982, e.g. p. 238; Yiftach n.d.–a). Other clauses that are to some extent recurring themes in contracts include the *paramone*, the obligation for one of the parties to stay with the other or not to abandon his or her assets (e.g. Samuel 1965), and the *ekdosis*, the delivery of a person who is owned by or is under the authority of another to a third person for a designated purpose (Wolff 1961, p. 163).

Some clauses and structures were unique to distinct types of contracts, some even to distinct subcategories: among the 280 clauses currently surveyed in Greek documents in Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt, only about 70 are general (i.e. applied in more than one type of contract); among the remaining 210, about 75 are particular to lease contracts, approximately 35 to loans, and about 35 to sales and various other types of hereditary disposition.

Even when a given clause is continuously applied in a given format, its contents never remains unaltered through time. An analysis of these changes – and of various formulations applied in contracts – should naturally not be limited to Egypt. There is abundant reference to the formulary of Greek contracts in contemporary Roman legal sources, inscriptions, literary sources of all kinds, the *Halachah*, and naturally also the papyrological source material stemming from other parts of the Hellenistic and Roman world (e.g. Scheibelreiter 2010 and Rubinstein 2010). Some of the terminological variations and changes yielded by such a survey do not seem to be of substantial importance. In lease contracts, the rent is designated *phoros* when it is delivered in cash, but *ekphorion* when delivered in kind (Herrmann 1958, pp. 98–100). In the early Roman Arsinoites, hereditary dispositions taking the format of the Greek *diatheke* use different terminology and phrasing to denote the act of bequeathal compared to those applying the *meriteia* (“division of property”) (Yiftach 2002, pp. 158–159), yet these two variations have little impact on the terms and consequences of the contract. But, in other cases, changes in contents and terminology do matter: contracts from the Early Ptolemaic Period allow creditors different forms of execution for the recovery of a default debt, allowing them to apply execution reserved to the state or, alternatively, that resulting from a court sentence (Rupprecht 1967, pp. 104–107). In lease contracts, when the lessee is ordered to pay a share of the crops grown rather than a fixed amount of money or crops (sharecropping), the risk of a bad harvest is borne by the lessor and the lessee in common, rather than by the lessee alone (Jördens 1990, pp. 233–259; Rowlandson 1996, pp. 214–215).

The reader is referred to a wide variety of monographs and articles focusing on each of the different clause types: the universal clauses, such as the *kyria*, *stipulatio*, and *praxis* have all been treated separately, and the various clauses that are unique to a particular type of contract have been studied in monographs dealing with the same (for a comprehensive account of monographs, see, primarily, Rupprecht 1994, pp. 106, 142, 147–148). Nonetheless, there is much still to be studied, particularly in relation to general trends in the formulation and level of detail of contracts.

Some preliminary observations can be made. Scattered in contracts, we find reference to external sources of standard. The most well known is “the law on deposits,” which is documented in deposit contracts from the Roman Period. But in this case, the scribes also specify the contents of some normative regulation: the payment of the *duplum* and indemnity for damage by the keeper of the deposit, if he or she did not return it on time (Berger 1911, p. 103; Scheibelreiter 2010). It is therefore unclear why a reference to the law itself was necessary at all (e.g. P.Louvre I 17.15-17). In other cases, some of the contents of the contractual relation remain unspecified, and are open to future interpretation by the parties themselves. This is the case in loan contracts when the debtor does not return the loan on time, and is made subject to the payment of the capital, indemnity, and the “befitting interests” (*kathekontes tokoi*) (e.g. P.Oxy. II 269 = Sel.Pap. I 69.8-10, AD 57). Such reference to a general standard seems also to be common whenever a contract aims at regulating the conduct of the parties: for example, Greek marriage documents, instead of obligating the husband to assign to his wife a fixed maintenance, instruct him to provide her with “all that is necessary and with clothing as befits a married woman” (BGU IV 1101.10-11, 13 BC; Yiftach-Firanko 2003, p. 186). The most affluent source on custom as a standard of conduct is lease contracts, or land-related work contracts, in which the lessee/employee undertakes to do “all that is customary” or “proper” in the period of lease (Herrmann 1958, pp. 126-127; Rowlandson 1996, p. 214). Clearly, in these cases, there was a notion of what was proper common to all contracting parties (note, in particular, CPR XVIII 11.10-13, 231 or 206 BC). In the case of leases, we cannot pinpoint any trend over time from specification to general standard, or vice versa – but there is one sphere of legal activity in which we may.

Greek marriage documents of the Ptolemaic Period specify just one type of dowry, the *pherne*. Legally, the *pherne* could be freely disposed of by the husband, who was obligated in the case of divorce to return its value, rather than the dotal assets themselves. As a result, authors of marriage contracts dispensed with giving account of the nature of these assets, and instead gave only the *pherne*’s total value. Any check on the husband’s freedom of disposal was probably social rather than legal. This state of affairs changes at the beginning of the Roman Period, as most of the dotal assets are given under new categories of dowry – the *prosphora* and the *parapherna* – of which the husband could no longer freely dispose. When some of these assets (i.e. the jewelry items) were later returned to the *pherne*, it was after the husband’s freedom of disposal of that category had been restricted as well. The move here seems to be from social to legal checks on the husband’s freedom of disposal (Yiftach-Firanko 2003, pp. 175-182).

A similar trend is evident in the case of the mother’s position as guardian. Appointing the mother guardian of underage children in her husband’s will was a common practice throughout the Ptolemaic and Roman Periods. At the same time, one does note some change in the way her position is defined. In the Early Ptolemaic Period, the wife was made the husband’s sole heir. Only after her death could the estate fall to her children’s share. The only proviso was that the wife remain unmarried, but there was no formal impediment on her freedom of disposal *inter vivos*. Here, too, the checks were probably social rather than legal. In the Roman Period, on the other hand, it was the children who became the sole heirs of their father’s estate immediately after his death, with the mother appointed guardian, subject to the constraints and control mechanisms applied in the case

of all other guardians (Yiftach-Firanko 2006, p. 164). Here, again, we note a move from social to legal checks. These examples derive from one restricted and unique area of legal activity: family law. There are some indications that the same trend is to be found in other documents recording other types of legal act.

12.2 Continuity and Change in Egyptian Legal Documents

The Egyptians had a long tradition of written legal documents (Lippert 2008). The “house document” (“Hausurkunde,” *imy.t-pr*), signed by witnesses and sealed by an official, was one of the dominant types in the Old and Middle Kingdoms. This was eventually replaced by the “scribe and witness contract” (“Schreiber- und Zeugenurkunde”; Zauzich 1968), which was drawn up by a notary in the presence of witnesses, but no longer needed to be sealed. Until the end of the third century BC, some witnesses not only signed, but also copied (part of) the contract, resulting in long and impressive papyrus documents (Depauw 1999; photograph in e.g. P.Brit.Mus. IV, plate 1). This practice was quickly abandoned, and simple witnesses’ signatures sufficed, either written below the contract or put on the back beneath a symbol meaning “has said” (*ḏd*) with reference to the front side, which signified that the witnesses had repeated the contract orally.

12.2.1 Find Context

Of the roughly 15 000 Demotic texts known, 1383 may be labeled legal documents of the Greco-Roman Period (Depauw 2015; Trismegistos online, September 2016). These mainly originate from areas that were less rapidly Hellenized, such as the Thebaid (801), but some early Hellenized regions such as the Fayum produced Demotic contracts well into the Roman Period (405) (e.g. P.Dime III; see in general Zauzich 1968). By contrast, the number of Demotic legal documents in Middle (62) and Lower Egypt (74, all from Memphis) is low.

Egyptian legal documents play an important role in family archives, but also turn up in official and temple contexts. The major part of the Thebaid Demotic legal documents (363) are part of the bilingual family archives of Pathyris, near Thebes (Vandorpe and Waebens 2010a; see the previously mentioned Greek legal documents from Pathyris); they were found in the residential area, and were kept by Hellenized Egyptians or by Greeks who married into a local family (c. 200–88 BC, e.g. Peteharsemtheus son of Panobchounis and the Dryton family; TM Arch 183 and 74). The Theban West and East Bank produced Demotic legal documents from the very beginning of the Ptolemaic Period until the third century AD (335 in total). The earliest texts (late fourth–third century BC) come from purely Egyptian archives, such as that of Pechytes son of Pchorchonsis, covering five generations of a family of choachytes (funerary priests) (335–198 BC; TM Arch 177). The Theban middle and late Ptolemaic legal documents are part of bilingual family archives such as the choachytes archives of Panas son of Pechytes and of Osoroeris son of Horos (TM Arch 364 and 50). The Roman archive of Chabonchonsis (AD 150–225; TM Arch 49) contains some informal Demotic lease contracts on ostrakon (e.g. P.Zauzich 33).

Although many Greeks settled in the Fayum, Demotic legal documents (405 in all) have been uncovered in a wide range of archives in that region (Vandorpe et al. 2015). Purely Egyptian archives are confined to the third century BC, such as that of the oil seller Phanesis (TM Arch 188). Early Ptolemaic papyri extracted from the cartonnage of human mummies found in Ghoran produced a group of surety contracts for people working for the government in several Fayum towns; these texts, endorsed with a Greek summary, must have been part of an official archive. The undertakers (*nekrotaphoi*) of Hawara left us two large bilingual archives covering a time span of more than 300 years (365–330 BC), unearthed in the area west of the Hawara pyramid; these include title deeds, proving ownership of both tombs and houses (TM Arch 145 and 359). The Ptolemaic temple environment produced (usually bilingual) archives of the temple as institution, but also papers of individual priests; the former include self-dedications to gods, work contracts, loans, and so on (temple of Soknopaiou Nesos, 180–118 BC; TM Arch 236), the latter sales and leases (archive of Sokonopis, 119–179 BC; TM Arch 278). The “struggle for survival of Demotic script” in the Early Roman Period is illustrated by the archive of Kronion son of Apion, head of the *grapheion* or writing office of Tebtynis (20 BC–AD 56; TM Arch 93), and that of Satabous son of Herieus, priest in Soknopaiou Nesos (20 BC–AD 88; TM Arch 151), both incorporating a few Demotic sales with Greek subscription.

12.2.2 *A Solid Uniformity*

The landscape of the Demotic legal documents was quite uniform: important contracts such as land conveyances were composed by the local **temple notary** and almost exclusively written on papyrus (rarely on pottery, wood, limestone, or stelae; Depauw 2015).

Egyptian contracts had fixed clauses (e.g. an interest clause in loan contracts or a divorce clause in marriage contracts), displaying some regional and chronological phrasing variants. There seems to be no real impact of Greek formulary at any stage. Phrasing variants in surety contracts have been studied in detail by Sethe and Partsch (1920), those in sale, marriage, and lease contracts by Zauzich (1968), Lüddeckens (1960), and Felber (1997), respectively (see also P.Dime III). Chronological variants are more difficult to retrieve, but are attested for the city of Thebes, where a substantial number of sale contracts is available for the entire Ptolemaic Period (Zauzich 1968). The Roman era brought some noticeable changes in the formulary: Egyptian contracts from early Roman times often skip the lengthy stipulations or end in the middle of a clause (P.Dime III, 37–40).

The fixed contractual clauses were probably available in a handbook like the so-called Hermopolis codex (P.Mattha; Donker Van Heel 1990; Lippert 2004). This “codex,” discovered in Middle Egyptian Hermopolis in 1938–1939, is rather a juridical manual for Egyptian priests who acted either as judge or as notary; it contains particular forms of legal documents such as land leases, with casuistically construed guidelines as to how their clauses should be interpreted if they are presented as evidence to court. At least part of the manual may, arguably, be traced back to an original of the eighth century BC under Pharaoh Bocchoris (Twenty-fourth Dynasty, Pestman 1983b; but see Markiewicz 2008). Greek translations illustrate the (theoretical or practical) interest in this code of regulations as late as the second century AD.

Writing Demotic contracts was the prerogative of the temple notary (*sh*), called in Greek texts the *monographos*, who wrote (alone) in the name of the priests of the local temple; he could be assisted by a representative (*rd*). The profession of temple scribe was often a family affair, drawn from the local aristocracy (e.g. Phabis and his descendants, scribes of the temple of Amonrasonther in Karnak; see P. Recueil I, pp. 154–158). The most common types of contract were sales, loans, leases, marriage, divorce contracts, wills, and receipts (Depauw 1997, section 7.2, 2015; Lippert 2008, pp. 136–174). Some of these differ greatly from their Greek counterparts. For example, Egyptian wills were in fact a “deed of division” (*sh dny.t ps*) that made the children joint owners during the lifetime and full heirs after the death of the testator. Egyptian sales consisted, as a rule, of two contracts – a “document concerning silver” (*sh n dbz hdd*, Greek *syngraphe ones*) and a “document of cession,” or quitclaim (*sh n wy*, Greek *syngraphe apostasiou*) – whether or not written on the same papyrus; the former acknowledged the receipt of the price, while the latter ceded all rights to a certain property. The advantage of this “double” system was that these documents could serve other purposes, too; for example, the “document concerning silver” could become a security for other agreements such as loans or marriage settlements, while the “document of cession” was suitable for ending a trial (Keenan et al. 2014, section 6.2; Depauw 2015).

The shape of the temple contracts is similar to that of the Greek notarial documents discussed earlier. Temple notaries applied the wide format (including long lines, broad margins, and a comprehensive dating protocol) for less common and more important transactions such as land conveyances; usually, 16 witnesses signed the deed on the back. For more common transactions, such as loans, temple contracts of the long type were still possible, but there was a clear tendency to apply the narrow format (including short lines, narrow margins, and a short dating protocol), signed at the bottom by four witnesses (e.g. the title deed P. Adler Dem. 2, 56.5 cm wide, versus the loan P. Adler Dem. 6, 17.5 cm wide; P. Dryton, 106–107).

All these temple contracts were entered in a temple register (Muhs 2009), but they were also – probably already under Ptolemy II – supervised by the government, as they could or should be registered in a state office called the *grapheion* or *agoranomeion*. A few such registers – both Greek and Demotic, either in a daybook format or kept monthly – are preserved (Muhs 2005a,b, 2009). Around 145 BC, the registration of Demotic documents (termed in contemporary bureaucratic terminology *anagraphe*; see earlier) became obligatory. Hence, the composition of the Demotic legal document entailed more costs and so became less popular, to the advantage of the Greek notarial contracts, which were automatically registered (Pestman 1985a; Muhs 2005a; Vanderpe 2015, pp. 178–179).

For minor transactions, usually small loans, Egyptians could rely on the cheaper **auto-graph documents** (usually called *bzk*), often written in a format that resembles that of a letter (Depauw 2012). Such Demotic informal legal documents, penned by the debtor, a representative, or a scribe, became popular for loans in the second century BC, when they received a more “formal” character by taking over several (although not all) clauses from the temple contracts (Vanderpe 2013a). The same period also sees the letter format become an established type – known as the *cheirographon* – in the Greek sphere (see earlier). The simultaneous rise in both cultural environments of the letter format as a routinely applied scheme in legal documents may be interrelated.

In contrast to Greek contracts, all Egyptian legal documents, whether notarial or informal, are written in a direct, subjective style, in which one party formulates the clauses in the first person and addresses the other party in the second person (e.g. “Party Y has said to Party X: ‘I owe you ... I shall return it to you ...’”).

12.2.3 *The Decline of Demotic Legal Documents and the Hellenization Process*

In the Early Ptolemaic Period, the impact of Greek private law was meager: a new hybrid type of Demotic contract was – rather unsuccessfully – introduced, combining characteristics of both Demotic temple contracts and Greek double documents (for which, see earlier); such contracts were written twice by a professional scribe, could be signed by witnesses, and were partly sealed (for a purely Egyptian example, see P.Brit.Mus. IV 19, 194 BC, with photograph pl. 46; some of the finest bilingual samples stem from the third-century BC archive of Zenon son of Agreophon, e.g. P.Zen.Pestm., plates I and III). This type of **Egyptian double document** becomes obsolete in the later second century BC (Lippert 2008, p. 140; Vandorpe 2013a).

Subject to certain formal requirements, temple contracts, autograph and double documents alike were valid evidence in a court case, even if the judges were Greek and not Egyptian, as was the case with the royal court of the *chrematistai*. Before the document could be presented to Greek judges, it had to be translated into Greek (e.g. UPZ II 177; Hoogendijk 2006; P.Erbstreit, App. II). The situation changed when a new law in 118 BC stated, according to the *communis opinio*, that the choice of law court (the Egyptian court of the *laokritai* or the Greek chrematist-judges) was determined by the language of the evidence (Pestman 1985b; Meleze 1975); hence, translations were no longer required, although they were nevertheless still produced (e.g. CPR XV 2). This law of 118 BC, in combination with the previously mentioned costly registration procedures, may have caused a further regression of Demotic legal documents.

In the same period, the government made it easier for the Egyptian-speaking population to appeal to a Greek notary (Vandorpe 2011): in almost every village, a Greek office or branch was installed. As the Greek notaries were often members of a local priestly family who were trained in Greek, they knew how to apply well-established Greek clauses, formularies, and documents in a way that would allow their Egyptian clients to hold on to their ancestral traditions (e.g. a Greek equivalent, called *parachoresis* or *dosis*, was created for the previously mentioned Egyptian will). The new measures were apparently successful, as, for instance, in the provincial Egyptian town of Pathyris, located near Thebes, the percentage of Greek documents rises from 32% in the early to 64% in the late second century BC. The major part of these are legal documents; private papers such as letters and accounts were still written in the mother tongue (Vandorpe and Waebens 2010a, pp. 87–89). The Hellenization process also led to the production of bilingual contracts, although they constitute a minority (c. 300 examples); most are Demotic contracts with Greek secondary notes (Depauw 2009; P.Dime III, pp. 4–5).

When, with Roman rule, registration procedures were fine-tuned and efficiency became a priority in the administration, the use of Demotic was further discouraged by a demand for costly Greek subscriptions and summaries on Demotic legal documents.

As a consequence, contracts in native script largely disappear in the first century AD, never to return (Depauw 2003; Lippert 2008, pp. 138–139; Keenan et al. 2014, section 3.2). Greek legal documents became dominant in Roman and Late Antique Egypt. Coptic was never used as the language of administration, and hence is hardly found in legal documentation before the Arab conquest. The earliest example of a juridic text in Coptic is an arbitrage from c. AD 534–550 (P.Berol. inv. 11 349; Fournet 2010, pp. 130–132), and the earliest legal document (recording a legal act; see the introductory section) is an acknowledgement of debt from AD 596 (CPR IV 90). These early Coptic legal texts are confined to the Thebaid and, rather unexpectedly, come mostly from Hellenized and urban milieus (Fournet 2010). There are, moreover, some minor Greek–Coptic interferences, such as Egyptian words or phrases taken over in Greek legal documents (Keenan et al. 2014, section 3.4). In addition, Greek legal documents could be translated into Coptic for those who did not understand Greek (Clackson 2010, p. 95). After the Arab conquest, private legal documents in Coptic become far more widespread (for the formula in Coptic “*Rechtsurkunden*,” see Richter 2008).

12.3 Roman Legal Documents

Up to the reforms of Diocletian, Roman legal documents (in the narrow sense of contracts and wills) are rarely attested in the Egyptian *chora*, and usually originate from military circles (including veteran archives). The few examples we have (less than 20) relate either to the law of succession (wills and manumissions of slaves) or the law of marriage (the *Lex Iulia*; P.Mich. VII 434, 444); there are hardly any Latin sales among the documents written in Egypt (e.g. P.Oxy. XLI 2951, a sale of a slave by an *optio* (“lieutenant”) with Greek subscriptions and showing influences from the Greek law of contract; PSI VI 729, a sale of a horse). One should note that the Latin examples from Egypt were sometimes written in another part of the Roman world before they ended up in the Nile Valley (e.g. P.Mich. VII 442, a contract dealing with a dowry, discovered in Karanis but composed in Mauretania Caesariensis; the sale on the wax tablet SB III 6304, a Latin text partly written with Greek characters, found in the Arsinoite nome but composed in Ravenna).

The few Roman legal documents we have are either written in Latin only or are translated into Greek, have Greek summaries, or have Greek subscriptions (for Latin wills, see BGU VII 1696, P.Mich. VII 437 and 446; for Greek and bilingual examples, see Keenan et al. 2014, p. 120). They often have a distinct format: a booklet of two or three wax tablets, known as a “double/triple-folded document” or *diptychon/triptychon*, formulated as a *testatio* (a document signed by witnesses, in front of whom the testator makes his declaration). The wills in this format are sealed, with the names of the (seven) witnesses written on the outside. The marriage contracts are written twice: one version (*scriptura interior*) was sealed by the witnesses, while the other was left unsealed so that it could be consulted (*scriptura exterior*) (e.g. P.Mich. VII 444). This new format, including the sealing procedure, was adapted for documents on papyrus (P.Mich. VII 434 and 442, both marriage contracts; Vandorpe and Van Beek 2012, p. 83). With the reforms of Diocletian, Latin was imposed as an official administrative language; this affected some types of documentation,

particularly those relating to court proceedings (Palme 2015), but was not felt in the sphere of legal documents *per se*. Eventually, imperial policy in the Byzantine Period led to Latin being abandoned again as an administrative language (Fournet 2009).

12.4 Conclusion

With the massive Greek immigration under the Ptolemies, the landscape of legal documents became a dual one: the indigenous population could continue to frequent the Egyptian temple notary and to have contracts written in its own language, while the Greeks could visit the new types of notarial office. There was some interaction between the two worlds, in that Egyptians took over some Greek practices, such as the double documents, and the Greek notarial offices offered good alternatives to Egyptian practices in order to persuade the Egyptian population to frequent them more regularly. At one point, the Ptolemaic government was willing to indulge both worlds, but eventually Egyptians had to have their Demotic contracts registered at a Greek office. The Romans, on the other hand, discouraged the use of Demotic contracts from an early stage, and as a result Demotic legal documents disappeared, while Greek ones flourished as never before; even with the advent of Coptic, the Egyptian language was hardly used in a legal context. Latin legal documents were rarely redacted in Egypt, even when, with the reign of Diocletian, Latin was for some time imposed as an official administrative language.

As a result of these developments, we can follow the Greek legal documentation over a very long period. Much of the account in this chapter is based on the databank *Synallagma: Greek Contract in Context*. We have presented some conclusive results on the chronological and regional dispersion of the documentary material from Egypt, as well as on the question what type of scribe undertook the composition of what type of document. But, as some sections have shown, most of the work – perhaps the most interesting – lies ahead. A comprehensive survey of Greek contractual history in Antiquity – whether of the individual clauses or of general trends – has never been conducted. With the ongoing development of *Synallagma*, we hope to be on the right track. A detailed comparison with the Egyptian formulary would be a further step, and might reveal more interaction than has hitherto been expected.

FURTHER READING

Greek, Demotic, and Coptic legal documents are discussed and presented in detail in the sourcebook *Law and Legal Practice in Egypt from Alexander to the Arab Conquest. A Selection of Papyrological Sources in Translation, with Introductions and Commentary* (Keenan et al. 2014). Several aspects of legal documents from across the whole Ancient world (including not only the documentation of Egypt, but also that of Mesopotamia, of the Classical and Hellenistic Greek world, and of the Roman Empire) are confronted in a series of volumes entitled *Legal Documents in Ancient Societies* (LDAS; e.g. Yiftach-Firanko 2013 on legal documents in letter format; Depauw and Coussement 2014 on identifiers in legal documents).

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Life Portraits: People and their Everyday Papers in a Bureaucratic Society

Sofie Waebens

A bureaucratic society like that of ancient Egypt, with its multitude of officials, centralized administration, and extensive use of written documentation, generates a considerable amount of “paperwork” (primarily papyri, but also ostraca and wooden tablets). The day-to-day working of the administrative and legal institutions entailed not only a continuous flow of documents between the administration in Alexandria and the record offices in the countryside, but also extensive correspondence between officials, even those working next-door. Almost none of the documentation stored in the central archives at Alexandria has survived, but copies and records of legal contracts were kept in the regional and local record offices, while officials were required to keep daybooks of their activities and copybooks of their correspondence (both incoming and outgoing), which were preserved in the archives of their offices. Given the mass of paperwork produced each day, these archives would have been crammed with papers. Old records were therefore deposited in rubbish dumps, reused as scrap paper or as mummy cartonnage, or taken home by officials after their term of office and stored in their personal archives (Vandorpe 2009, pp. 231–233).

Among the personal papers of officials and individuals survive not only state-issued documents (primarily receipts registering land tenure and tax payments), but also drafts or copies of petitions and declarations addressed to the authorities, copies of court-proceeding reports, and, above all, private contracts (primarily title deeds and loans). These contracts, recorded in writing to establish legal rights and title to property, could be produced as evidence in court and were therefore passed down through the generations and added to family archives (on such archives, see Vandorpe 2009, pp. 233–234). The enforcement of contracts – always a difficult matter – was ensured by their registration in local record offices, for which a fee had to be paid. Because of their value in proving legal rights, ancient Egyptians kept their papers in a safe place; otherwise, they might be

stolen, as had happened to a woman named Tapentos: “To Polemon, *epistates* (village head) of Kerkeosiris, from Tapentos, daughter of Horos, of the same village. An attack was made upon my dwelling by Arsinoe and her son Phatres, who went off with the contract relating to my house and other business documents” (P.Tebt. I 52, c. 114 BC). Archives were therefore hidden in cellars, under thresholds, and even in tombs (Vandorpe 2009, pp. 219–220).

This chapter discusses different types of archive, focusing in particular on the documents they contained and the insight they give into the lives of ordinary people and their dealings with the bureaucratic machine. The archives are presented in chronological order, starting with that of Apollonios from the third century BC and ending with the well-known archive of Flavius Abinnaeus from the fourth century AD.

13.1 The Archive of the *Oikonomos* Apollonios: A Glimpse into the Paperwork of a Financial Officer

The archive of Apollonios (TM Arch 17) comprises at least 15 papyri, all of them dating between years 8 and 10 of the reign of Ptolemy IV Philopator (214–213 BC). The papyri were discarded and reused as mummy cartonnage, and represent only a small fraction of the paperwork that the office of *oikonomos* or “steward” generated.

The archive primarily consists of letters, most of them written by Metrodoros, the official in charge of the state finances in the Arsinoite nome in Middle Egypt, and addressed to Apollonios, his subordinate. The letters and a fragmentary list recording amounts of grain (P.Köln XII 478.1–26) reveal that Apollonios was responsible for the villages of Memphis, Eleusis, Hieria Nesos, Aphroditopolis, Tebetny, Souris, Mouchis, Bousiris, Oxyryncha, Phylakitike Nesos, and Pterophorou Epoikion, all situated in the *meris* of Polemon in the south of the nome (Maresch 1987, pp. 156–163). He probably resided in Oxyryncha; in P.Köln VI 260, Metrodoros announces his upcoming visit to this town for the auction of tax-farming contracts, and instructs Apollonios to make all necessary preparations to avoid delays. The docket on the back, dated March 9, 213 BC, reads: “... Year 10, (month of) Tybi 26, Metrodoros ... of the sale of tax-farming contracts...” All incoming letters were docketed by date and name of the sender, followed by a brief description of the content.

The archive also contains outgoing correspondence, mostly drafts: on the back of P.Köln VI 261, Apollonios announces to Metrodoros that he will forward a copy of a letter on the recto reporting the theft of oil by war prisoners. As illustrated by this example and by P.Köln VI 259, which concerns the monthly allotments of barley to the brewers in Oxyryncha, the letters mainly deal with matters relating to the monopolies on beer and oil production (see Box 10.1). Apollonios’ other responsibilities as *oikonomos* can also be glimpsed in his correspondence: in P.Köln VI 258, for instance, he instructs the district head (toparch) Ammeneus to draw up the monthly account of the tax collected at the royal granary, and to bring it to the nome capital. The letter urges Ammeneus to be punctual, because the account, which still has to be checked and balanced with that of

the tax-farmers, has to reach the central record office at Alexandria on time. A public announcement of the sale of property confiscated from a brewer in Memphis also survives among his papers (P.Köln VI 268).

13.2 The Tefhape Lawsuit Archive: A Tale of Two Brothers

Toward the beginning of the reign of Ptolemy VI Philometor (180–145 BC), in the small village of Siut (Lykopolis) in Middle Egypt, there lived two half-brothers named Totoes and Tefhape, who owned in the temple estate of the jackal god Wepwawet two plots of land amounting to 10 arouras (almost 3 ha). The papyri preserved in the archive of Tefhape and his family (TM Arch 237, 181–169 BC) reveal that he and his brother had inherited the land from their father Petetymis, a well-off lector priest and scribe of the divine books, in 181 BC: Totoes, the older, was given two-thirds of the land (P.Siut 10 591 verso, col. v–vii), while Tefhape, the younger, received one-third (P.Siut 10 575) (Figure 13.1). At first, the two half-brothers cultivated the land together, dividing the profits between them in the same proportion as their inheritance, but at some point a dispute arose over Tefhape's share, which culminated in a trial before the Egyptian judges (*laokritai*) in the temple of Siut on June 22, 170 BC.

A copy of the report of court proceedings, almost 3 meters in length, records the case in detail (P.Siut 10 591 recto): Cratianch, Totoes' wife, claimed that all of the land belonged to her husband, because children from a second marriage (*in casu* Tefhape) were prohibited by law from inheriting paternal property without the permission of the first wife or her eldest son, and since Totoes had pledged all his property to her as security for her dowry at the time of their marriage (185 BC), the land was rightfully hers. The *laokritai* nevertheless ruled in favor of Tefhape, who could prove that his older half-brother and sister-in-law had assented in writing to the conveyance of one-third of the inheritance to him. By this judgment, Tefhape was restored to his rights, but Cratianch requested almost at once a rehearing of the case before the *laokritai* in Ptolemais (called Psoi in Egyptian), the largest city of Middle Egypt, on the grounds that she had been

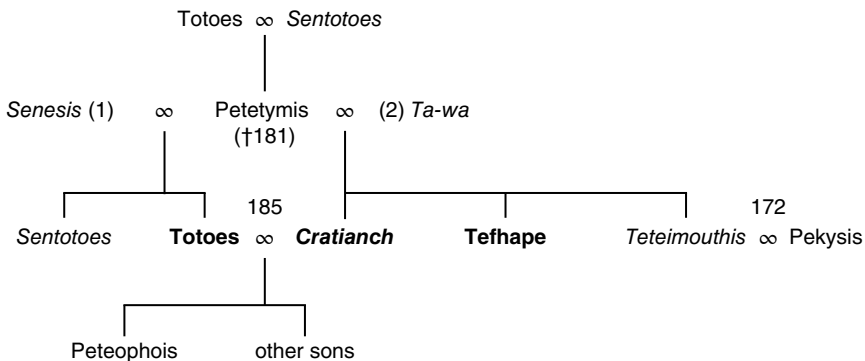


Figure 13.1 The family of Tefhape from Lykopolis. Source: courtesy Sofie Waebens.

forced to write a quitclaim with respect to the land (P.Siut 10591 verso, col. iv). The claim was denied, but Tefhape's rights continued to be challenged: in P.Siut 10599–10 600 (two petitions written on May 16, 169), he complains that he was assaulted by his half-brother while trying to reap the crop from his share of the land. No documents inform us about the final stages of the dispute, but the assault may have prompted another round of petitions and, potentially, court appearances (for further discussion, see Van't Dack 1988, pp. 314–316; Vleeming 1989; Manning 2003a, pp. 201–205, 2010, pp. 207–216).

Although the archive mainly consists of documents produced during the trial or collected in anticipation of another hearing (hence the term “lawsuit archive”), the texts nevertheless allow us a glimpse into Tefhape's life, providing information about his wealth, his tense relationship with his half-brother and sister-in-law, his activities as a small-scale landowner in the years between the trials (P.Siut 10595–10 597), and, above all, his dealings with the legal system aimed at securing his inheritance.

13.3 The Family Archive of Peteharsemtheus, a Small-scale Landowner and Businessman

From Siut, we move southward to Pathyris, a garrison town some 30 km south of Thebes, where over 100 documents from the archive of a small-scale landowner and businessman named Peteharsemtheus have been discovered. The family archive (TM Arch 183) contains documents relating to Peteharsemtheus' grandfather Totoes, his father Panebchounis, and Peteharsemtheus himself, providing information about their activities for the period 145–88 BC (Figure 13.2).

Totoes' papers, of which only a few survive, reveal a complex marital history: from his first marriage to Tareesis, he had Panebchounis, but soon after the birth, the couple divorced. Totoes then married Takmeis, his ex-wife's younger sister, who bore him three children: a son, Pates, and two daughters, Taelolous and Siepmous. Among his papers survive three

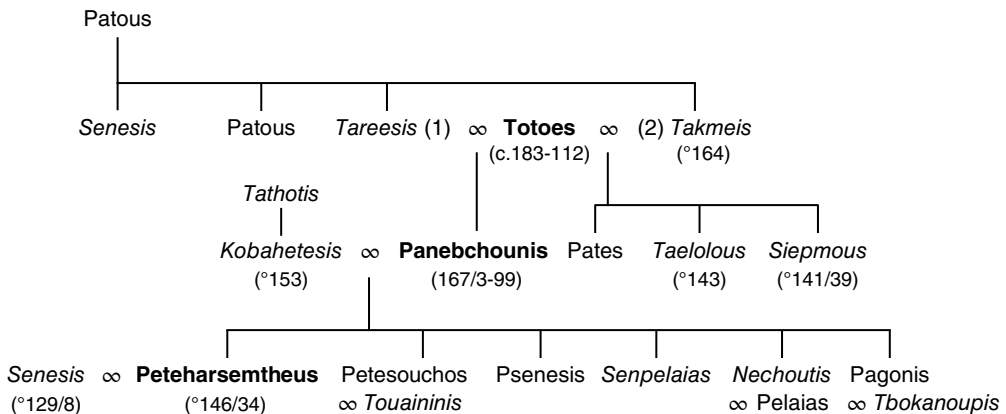


Figure 13.2 The family of Peteharsemtheus from Pathyris. Source: courtesy Sofie Waebens.

documents relating to his new wife, including a loan to her brother (P.Grenf. II 17). Totoes' own papers primarily consist of loans: at various points, he borrowed large amounts of money (up to 48 000 drachmas, roughly the equivalent of two houses), which he was not always able to pay back in time. His in-laws may have contributed to some extent to his financial difficulties: his father-in-law left substantial debts, which were settled by later generations of the family (P.Lips. I 7; P.Grenf. II 31). In March 113 BC, shortly before his death, he divided his property (a house, a building plot, and two plots of land) between his children. Two versions of this will are extant: the earliest, which virtually disinherits Panebchounis' half-brother Pates, reflects family tensions (P.Lond. III 880; P.Stras. II 85).

The documents relating to Panebchounis include those of his wife Kobahetesis and his half-sister Taelolous, and mainly consist of tax receipts, title deeds, and loan repayments. From these texts, it is clear that Panebchounis was financially better off than his father and his grandfather, because his wife, with whom he had six children, came from a relatively prosperous family (Pestman 1969, pp. 152–155). He was thus able to pay long-outstanding family debts and to purchase a share in a house and four plots of agricultural land near Pathyris, a sign that he was financially secure, particularly in the later part of his life. His management of the family estate, however, began to worry his sons, prompting them to take precautions to safeguard the property (P.AdI.Dem. 9, 105/4 BC). Their concern was justified: shortly before his death, on June 16, 99 BC, Panebchounis sold the plots he had acquired 15 years previously – but the sale was illegal, because eight weeks later Peteharsemtheus, his eldest son, bought the land back at the same price (Lewis 1986, p. 148).

Peteharsemtheus inherited his father's papers and added them to his own archive. A few documents, notably tax receipts and loans, offer glimpses of his going about his business as a small-scale landowner and herdsman, paying taxes and fines for illegal land extension, grazing cattle, cultivating wine and oil in addition to grain, and borrowing wheat or barley in times of need – when mice, for instance, had eaten up all the grain seed (P.Grenf. II 36, 95 BC). His business dealings are far better documented: almost two-thirds of his papers are business-related, recording property transmissions by sale or debt, land leases, and loans (Vandorpe and Waebens 2010a, pp. 169–170). Peteharsemtheus emerges from these documents as a successful businessman, using produce to make interest-bearing loans, taking possession of property on which he had held mortgages, and purchasing various plots of land – all below four *arouras* (over 1 ha) and situated near Pathyris. The total size of his property is difficult to assess, since most of it was held jointly with family members or mortgaged to free cash for investments, but in addition to cattle, he had two shares in houses, one building plot, and 16 plots of agricultural land (Pestman 1965, pp. 54–88). Table 13.1 lists all transactions, from sales to mortgages to foreclosures, with respect to four plots of land from 115 to 88 BC, illustrating the complexity of Peteharsemtheus' economic activities and his tendency to repurchase land from family members and reconsolidate family holdings. Family in general played an important role in his business dealings, particularly in the early part of his life: he frequently engaged in business transactions with his brothers, and a number of loans reflect a strong familial solidarity (Chauveau 1997, pp. 220–222). Among his papers also survive documents of family members, notably the marriage contract of his sister Nechoutis (P.Ehevertr. 45) and several receipts concerning a vineyard he owned jointly with his maternal grandmother Tathotis (Vandorpe and Clarysse 2008, pp. 164–165; Thomas 2012, pp. 210–215).

Table 13.1 Survey of transactions in relation to four plots of land in the plain of Pathyris.

<i>Text</i>	<i>Date BC</i>	<i>Price (drachmas)</i>	<i>Plot I</i>	<i>Plot II</i>	<i>Plot III</i>	<i>Plot IV</i>	<i>Seller/buyer</i>
P.Stras. II 81	December 30, 115	2000	×	×	×	×	Tbokanoupis and Tathothis d. of Pates/Panebchounis
P.Stras. II 84	September 3, 114	8000				×	Takmeis d. of Patous (stepgrandmother) and Siepmous d. of Totoes (steapaunt)/Petcharsemtheus
P.Grenf. II 23 ^a	November 15, 107	54 000 ^a		×	×		Taous and Senesis alias Tatous d. of Harpos and Siepmous d. of Pachnoumis (half cousin)/Petcharsemtheus and brothers
P.Stras. II 88	October 5, 105	12 000 (other part)		×	×		Siepmous d. of Pachoumis (half cousin)/Petcharsemtheus and brothers
BGU VI 1260 ^b	103/2? February 19, 101	18 000			^b		Petcharsemtheus/Nechtanoupis s. of Patseous and sons
SB XX 14393 ^b	September 21, 100	60 000 (incl. other plot)		^b		^b	Petcharsemtheus/Hetpesouchos s. of Nechtanoupis and brothers
P.Lond. III 1206	June 16, 99	12 000		×	×		Panebchounis/Petcharsemtheus s. of Pakoibis
P.Köln I 50	June 16, 99	12 000	×	×	×	×	Panebchounis/Petcharsemtheus s. of Pakoibis
P.Stras. II 89	July 8, 99	12 000	×	×	×	×	Petcharsemtheus s. of Pakoibis/Petcharsemtheus
P.Lips. 2	July 8, 99	1200				×	Titos d. of Patous/Petcharsemtheus

×, sale contract

Plot I, plot of land in the western plain (area Jd in Pestman 1965).

Plot II, plot of land named Tiabonis on the *tainia* (a strip of elevated land) in the northern plain (area Fa in Pestman 1965).

Plot III, plot of land adjoining Plot II on the *tainia* in the northern plain (area Fb in Pestman 1965).

Plot IV, plot of land named Pkro on the *tainia* in the northern plain (area Gb in Pestman 1965).

^aThe three women owned jointly 7 arouras of a larger plot, of which they sold 3.5 arouras to Petcharsemtheus and his brothers.

^bMortgage documents.

The archive, which primarily consists of business documents and tax receipts, presents us with a picture of Peteharsemtheus and his family members as moderately prosperous people who owned small landholdings in Pathyris, engaged in small-time entrepreneurial activities, and conducted rather complex business transactions. Most of these transactions – even loans between family members – were registered in the local record office, illuminating not only the amount of paperwork these activities involved, but also the extent to which the system of contract registration provided by the state was used by Peteharsemtheus and his family.

13.4 An Official at Work: The Paperwork of Menches, Village Scribe of Kerkeosiris

The archive of the village scribes of Kerkeosiris (TM Arch 140) takes us about 400 kilometers downriver from Pathyris to the south-west of the Arsinoite nome, an area marked by unrest and economic decline by the end of the second century BC, the period after the war between Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II and his sisters Cleopatra II and Cleopatra III (132–124 BC). Not only had many tenants fled the land they were cultivating, depriving the state of revenue (Lewis 1986, pp. 107–109), but the unrest in the nome also hindered the village scribe (*komogrammateus*) in his duties (P.Tebt. I 12). The name of this scribe was Menches, alias Asklepiades, and part of his paperwork and correspondence was discovered during excavations in the cemeteries of the ancient town of Tebtynis in 1899–1900, when a workman, disappointed to find only rows of mummified crocodiles, gave one of them a kick, splitting it open. The papyrus rolls in which the animal was wrapped turned out to be discarded documents from the village scribe's office at Kerkeosiris: over 150 papyri, some of them exceeding 4 meters in length, were found inside 21 crocodile mummies. The papyri span the last four decades of the second century, but the bulk stems from the period 119–110 BC, when Menches held the office of village scribe for the second and third time (on the conditions of his reappointment, see Verhoogt 1998, pp. 54–67).

As village scribe, Menches was responsible for the local land administration, compiling land registers, reports, and accounts, which form the core of the archive (Vandorpe et al. 2015, p. 446, appendix 4). A survey of the land was carried out twice a year, but the documents in the archive almost exclusively concern the “survey of the agricultural production,” held in February/March to assess the village's agricultural production and thus the level of taxation for the current year (Manning 2003a, pp. 146–156). The results were recorded in land registers, which list the precise location and size of each plot of cultivated land, field by field, and crop reports, which specify the condition of the land, the type of crop grown, and the potential yields by crop type or by landholder. Prior to being stored in the archive, the documents were assessed by Menches' superior, the royal scribe (*basilikos grammateus*), during a meeting held at the nome capital in March.

As well as being in charge of the land survey, Menches was responsible for monitoring and assessing the rent and taxes that could be expected from royal land and land of other categories (see Chapter 10). He was therefore required to compile periodical reports – perhaps every 10 days – to keep his superiors informed about every stage of the village's

agricultural production, from the preparation of the land for sowing and the maintenance of irrigation canals and dikes, to the registration of the rent and taxes collected at the royal granary after the harvest. Incidents that could potentially hinder the village's agricultural progress were reported at once; in early November 114 BC, for instance, Menches informed the royal scribe about a strike of royal farmers at his village, which could have delayed the sowing and was therefore quickly dealt with (Verhoogt 1998, pp. 167–175). After the harvest, which began in April/May, another busy period started for Menches: the rent and taxes, paid in instalments by local farmers and due in full by August, had to be registered; the accounts fill some of the longest papyrus rolls preserved in the archive.

Among the documents relating to the local land administration survive five “working” accounts (P.Tebt. I 1151–1155), recording the revenues and expenses involved in the day-to-day management of the village scribe's office (Verhoogt 2005, pp. 62–65), as well as Menches' correspondence with his fellow officials. Most incoming letters contain instructions from the royal scribe, his direct superior: in P.Tebt. I 17, for instance, he instructs Menches to have his paperwork in order for the upcoming visit of an official to Kerkeosiris, “so that you may not detain him and incur no little expense” (lines 7–9). Drafts (or copies) of Menches' outgoing letters are also preserved, as are a large number of complaints from villagers seeking justice for crimes and asking Menches to send a copy of their petition to the appropriate officials (for the case of an oil seller complaining about illegal oil-smuggling, see Lewis 1986, pp. 119–120).

Menches' papers, although discarded and incomplete, offer insight into the day-to-day working of the village scribe's office at Kerkeosiris, giving us an idea of the administrative burden imposed on officials (Verhoogt 1998, pp. 142–146). Perhaps it comes as no surprise that 12 of Menches' colleagues went on a strike in 118–117 BC, the period just after the end of the war. The unrest surrounding the strike not only hindered Menches in the performance of his duties, but also attracted unwanted official scrutiny, prompting him to hastily submit a petition to the king on May 22, 117 BC regarding allegations made against him and his brother by a man named Haryotes, who accused them of poisoning him while they were dining at an inn (Verhoogt 1998, pp. 149–166). Although the case had been investigated and both of them had been acquitted, Menches nevertheless feared that he would be subjected again to false accusations and therefore requested “that no one can reinstitute proceedings from motives of calumny or extortion, and thus no one will be allowed hereafter to harass us over the same charges” (translation Lewis 1986, p. 117).

13.5 The Family Archive of Tryphon, a Humble Weaver Plagued by Bad Luck

The archive of Tryphon (TM Arch 249, AD 11–66), comprising over 40 papyri, comes from a few decades after the start of Roman rule in Egypt. Born at Oxyrhynchos, the nome capital of the Oxyrhynchite nome, in AD 8/9, Tryphon first appears as a three-year-old in a copy of a household declaration submitted for the census of AD 11/12 by his 64-year-old grandfather Tryphon, who headed a household consisting of three adult sons, all weavers like him (Figure 13.3) (P.Oxy. II 288 35–42; SB X 10220 is a copy of the actual entry in the register in AD 12/3). Tryphon himself later also became a weaver: the trade

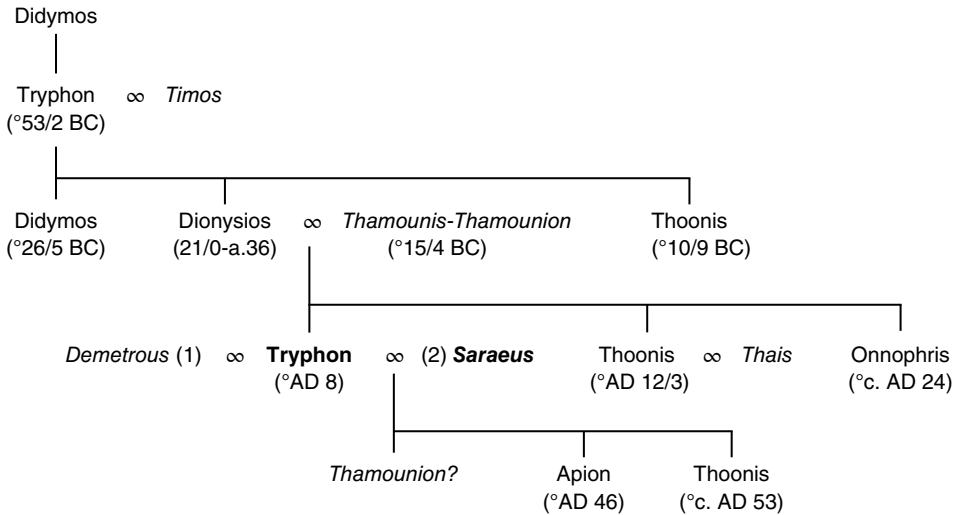


Figure 13.3 The family of Tryphon from Oxyrhynchos. Source: courtesy Sofie Waebens.

tax, first paid when he was 13 years old and still an apprentice, features prominently along with the poll tax, paid at the reduced rate of 12 drachmas, and other taxes in a tax account of the years AD 22–25, to which the declaration was attached. No documents inform us about the family’s workshop, but the archive contains, in addition to Tryphon’s tax receipts for the years AD 46–50 (SB X 10243), a tax receipt of his son Apion (SB X 10247, AD 56) and the apprenticeship contracts of his brother Onnophris and his younger son Thoonis (P.Oxy. II 275, AD 36; SB X 10236, AD 66; see Brewster 1927, pp. 140–144).

Five petitions and a report of a court hearing also survive among Tryphon’s papers, painting a picture of a man plagued by misfortune (Pestman 1989a). Trouble first came when he was in his twenties: by that time, he was married to a woman named Demetrous, but a fragmentary petition reveals that she left him after only a few years, taking some of his possessions with her (P.Oxy. II 282). This was not the end of the dispute, because in AD 37 Tryphon reported to the authorities that his ex-wife and her mother had assaulted his wife Saraeus, who was pregnant at the time, causing her to miscarry (SB X 10239). The attack occurred only a few weeks after a marriage agreement had been drawn up between him and Saraeus, with whom he had been living together (P.Oxy. II 267) and who had agreed in another contract to nurse their daughter, perhaps named Thamounion (SB X 10235). What happened next in the dispute is unclear (Kelly 2011, p. 313), but two other children were born to the couple: Apion (AD 46) and Thoonis (c. AD 53).

Not long after Apion’s birth, however, Tryphon and his wife came again into contact with the legal realm, since they had become involved in a dispute with a man named Pesouris, also known as Syros. P.Oxy. I 37, a copy of a report of the court hearing in AD 49, gives a brief account of the case: after weaning Apion, Saraeus was employed by Pesouris to nurse a foundling raised to become his slave, to which she may have agreed because the family was short of money. The child died, however, during the second year she was nursing it, whereupon Pesouris seized Apion from Tryphon’s home, claiming that it was his child.

Saraeus then went to his house and retrieved Apion, but Pesouris started a lawsuit against her, accusing her of snatching his child. After hearing the case, the judge ruled that the child appeared to be Saraeus' son, but Pesouris continued to harass the family with attempts to enslave the little Apion, even hindering Tryphon in his trade, as the latter complained in a petition addressed to the prefect of Egypt (P.Oxy. I 38; LXXVIII 5175). This action only made matters worse, as is apparent from two petitions containing complaints from Tryphon about an assault on him and Saraeus, who was pregnant again, and a burglary of his house in October/November 50 (SB X 10244–10245; Kelly 2011, pp. 314–315).

Tryphon's bad luck may have continued in later years, because according to a certificate issued by the prefect of Egypt, he was suffering from cataract and shortness of sight by AD 52, and therefore exempted from tax obligations (P.Oxy. I 39; II 317; for doubts, see Rowlandson 1998, p. 113). Yet, at the same time, business was booming (P.Oxy. I 99; P.Oxy. II 264; SB X 10248–10249; see Chapter 17), though in order to free cash, Tryphon was forced to take out loans, which he seems to have been able to repay in time (on the archive in general, see Biscottini 1966; Rowlandson 1998, pp. 112–113; Kelly 2011, pp. 131–133).

The archive of Tryphon introduces us to a relatively humble family of weavers living in first-century Oxyrhynchos, illuminating not only their use of the law to settle conflicts and protect their rights (both professionally and privately), but also their dealings with the administration, principally as taxpayers. Tryphon himself duly paid his taxes, but the family papers reveal that his younger brother Thoonis was more prone to tax evasion, and even deserted Oxyrhynchos in AD 44, as reported in a “notice of removal” (*anachoresis*) by his mother Thamounis/Thamounion, a widow by that time (P.Oxy. II 251). Thoonis had apparently been unable – or unwilling – to pay his taxes for some time, because five years before, his mother had borrowed 16 drachmas from Tryphon “for payment of taxes ... on behalf of Thoonis” (SB X 10238 11–12; translation Rowlandson 1998, pp. 116–117).

13.6 The Family Archive of M. Lucretius Diogenes, Great-grandson of a Roman Veteran

This archive of over 30 papyri (TM Arch 237) spans the period from AD 132 to 248, documenting five generations of a large and prominent family of Roman and Antinoite citizens living in Philadelphieia, a small town situated in the north-east of the Arsinoite nome. The first member of the family known to us is Marcus Lucretius Clemens, an auxiliary veteran of perhaps Syrian origin who moved with his wife and children to Philadelphieia in AD 132/3 and therefore had to undergo a status examination (called *epikrisis*) (Figure 13.4). An extract from the official records attests that he and his children had acquired citizen status through his military service, which he was able to prove by presenting a military diploma, the Roman army's official “discharge paper” (P.Diog. 5; for an example of a military diploma, see Box 13.1). This *epikrisis* document was passed down to his son Marcus Lucretius Diogenes and his grandson Marcus Lucretius Minor, both of whom married Roman citizens and thus succeeded in keeping citizenship within the family, enabling it to make use of Roman law and exempting its male members from the poll tax and other capitation taxes (see Chapter 10).

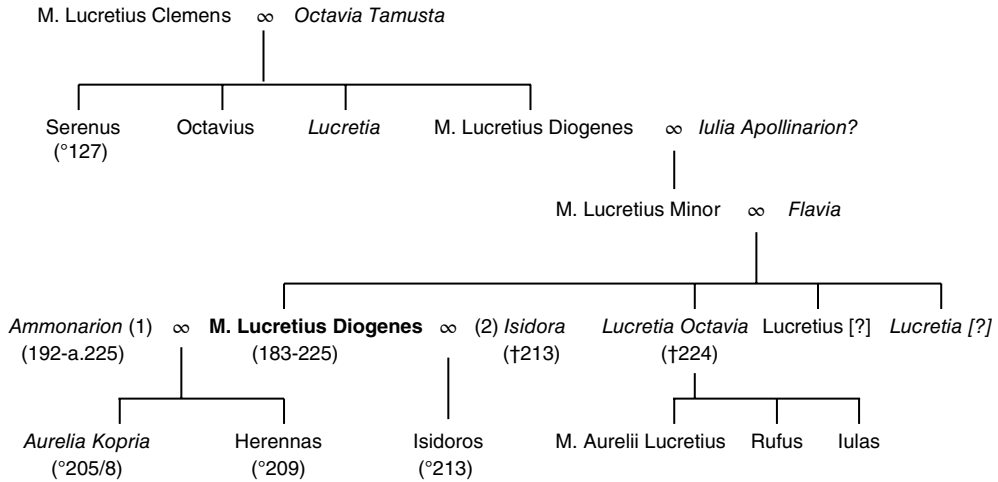


Figure 13.4 The family of M. Lucretius Diogenes from Philadelphia. Source: courtesy Sofie Waebens.

Box 13.1 Bronze military diplomas for fleet and auxiliary soldiers.

by Katelijn Vandorpe and Sofie Waebens

No other region outside Egypt provides such an amount of legal and other documentary texts, but when it comes to Roman military diplomas, Egypt has to acknowledge the superiority of provinces like Pannonia and Dacia, which produced a large amount of these bronze valuables. All in all, only nine diplomas relate to fleet or auxiliary soldiers who served in Egypt, two of which were discovered outside Egypt, probably in Bulgaria and Syria (CIL XVI 24, AD 79; CIL XVI 29, AD 83; CIL XVI 32, AD 86; RMD V 341, AD 98 or 105, found in Bulgaria?; RMD I 9, AD 105; CIL XVI 184, AD 157–161, found in Karanis (Egypt); CIL XVI 122, AD 166; RMD III 185, AD 179, found in Koptos (Egypt); Eck 2011, AD 206, found in Syria?).

The diplomas granted non-Roman fleet and auxiliary soldiers two privileges, on the condition that they were honorably dismissed after at least 25 (for auxiliaries) or 26 (and later 28) (for fleet soldiers) years of service: Roman citizenship (*civitas Romana*) and the *conubium*, the right to enter into a legal Roman marriage with a local woman. Regarding the latter point, such soldiers were often married to a native woman according to local law; when they became Roman citizens after their term of service, their marriages would ordinarily have become illegal. Therefore, they were legalized according to Roman law, although the wife remained an Egyptian or a Greek (if she dared to present herself as a Roman woman, she was penalized; see BGU V 1210, section 53: “Egyptian women married to discharged soldiers are, if they formally style themselves Romans, subject to the article on nonconformity of status”; see Phang 2001, p. 58, n. 11). Until AD 140, the children who had been born out of such an informal union also received Roman citizenship, but this favor was abolished by Antoninus,

probably because the privilege was considered too easy a way to acquire Roman citizenship, and unjust when compared to the situation of Roman legionaries (Waebens 2012). The latter's informal unions were never legalized, and their children were considered bastards until at least AD 206 (Eck 2011).

Each year, the emperor published a law with a full list of veterans who were entitled to the privileges. This law was made public in Rome (e.g. in AD 179, it was published on the wall behind the temple of Augustus on the Palatine Hill). Any veteran could ask for a copy, but had to pay a fee. The Latin law was copied on the inside of a bronze booklet, which was subsequently sealed by witnesses; a second copy was carved on the outside of the booklet and could be consulted at any time. The text of a diploma issued in AD 179 to Plution, son of Tithoes, from the Koptite nome (in Upper Egypt), runs as follows (RMD III 185; for an example of a fleet soldier's diploma, see Keenan et al. 2014, section 3.3.2):

Emperor Marcus Aurelius ... and (co-regent) Commodus ... have granted to the cavalrymen and infantrymen, who have served in four *alae* called *Veterana Gallica*, *Thracum Mauretanica*, *Vocontiorum* and *Apriana Provincialis*, and in nine cohorts, (called) I *Ulpia Equitata Afrorum*, I *Augusta Pannoniorum*, I *Apamenorum*, I *Lusitanorum*, I *Flavia Equitata Cilicum*, II *Thracum*, II *Ituraeorum*, III *Ituraeorum* and II *Thebaeorum*, and which are stationed in Egypt under the prefect Pactumeius Magnus, on the condition that each of them have served for 25 or more years and have been honorably dismissed, whose names are listed below, the Roman citizenship to those who did not yet have it, and the *conubium* with women, with whom they were together at the time they were granted citizenship, or with women whom they would take as wives afterwards, (though) each (soldier is granted *conubium*) with only one woman.

23 March under the consuls T. Flavius Claudianus (and) L. Aemilius Iuncus (AD 179). (Granted) to Plution, son of Tithoes, from the Koptite nome, one of the infantrymen (and) belonging to the *cohors* II *Thracum*, led by Caecilius Maior.

Copied and verified from the bronze table that is fixed in Rome on the wall behind the temple of the divine Augustus near (the statue of) Minerva.

The bulk of the archive concerns the later generations of the family, beginning with Marcus Lucretius Minor, who had four children by his wife Flavia: Diogenes, Lucretia Octavia, and a son and daughter whose names are lost. By that time, the family also held citizenship of the Greek city of Antinoopolis, but specific documentation was required to claim the fiscal privileges (notably a reduction in the rate of the poll tax) associated with that status: in AD 183, M. Lucretius Minor declared the birth of his youngest son Diogenes to the authorities in Antinoopolis, receiving a copy of his declaration (P.Diog. 2). In late February AD 197, when Diogenes was 14, a written declaration also had to be drafted, confirming his citizenship of Antinoopolis and his admission to the class of the metropolitae (the citizens of a *metropolis*, the capital of a nome; P.Diog. 8; see Chapter 18). Diogenes thus clearly belonged to the higher social strata of Philadelphieia, but unlike other members of his family, he did not marry a Roman citizen, but a girl from a local Greco-Egyptian family named Ammonarion, who may have been a member of the metropolite elite

(Schubert 2007, p. 67). She gave birth to their first child, a daughter named Kopria, between AD 205 and 208, when she was in her early teens. Their second child Herennas was born in AD 209, as documented in his birth declaration (P.Diog. 3–4), but soon afterward, the marriage broke down. Diogenes then married a woman named Isidora, a citizen of the Greek city of Ptolemais, with whom he had a son named Isidoros. Their marriage, however, was short-lived: she died of postnatal complications not long after drawing up her will in November or December 213 (P.Diog. 11–12), leaving most of her property to Isidoros, but bequeathing two slaves and a small sum of 500 drachmas to Diogenes.

Almost nothing is known of Diogenes' later life, but on January 12, 225 he requested to be appointed as guardian for two of his sister's orphaned and underage sons (P.Harris I 68 A–B; P.Diog. 18). He submitted the petition through his agent Aurelius Sarapion, perhaps a sign that he was ill by that time. Within a year, he too was dead, leaving his only surviving child Kopria, still a minor at the time, orphaned. After his death, Aurelius Sarapion, who may have been a relative of Ammonarion, became Kopria's guardian and added his own papers to the archive. These include a receipt confirming the registration of his report on his management of Kopria's property in the public archives (P.Diog. 19) and some receipts attesting payment of the sales tax by Ammonarion, who died between AD 217 and 225 (Vandorpe et al. 2015, pp. 248–249).

As is made clear by the documents in the archive, Diogenes was a moderately prosperous landowner, with at least 12½ arouras of grain land (c. 3 ha) in Philadelphia, who found himself short of money at various points in his life. He was therefore forced to take out loans, which he was not always able to pay back on time; at one point, he even had to loan his slave woman Pasistilla to the creditor (P.Diog. 16). Diogenes' marriages to Ammonarion and Isidora, both women of considerable wealth, may therefore have been a strategic move designed to improve the family's finances – apparently with some success, because his daughter Kopria was clearly financially secure, appearing as lessor of 8½ arouras of land in a lease offer (P.Diog. 29; for an extensive discussion of Diogenes' family, see Schubert 2007, pp. 55–68).

This archive shows Marcus Lucretius Diogenes going about his business as a privileged but modestly prosperous landowner in Philadelphia, who required particular documentation – attained at no small expense – to secure the privileges to which his double citizenship entitled him. The formalism demanded by Roman law of having wills and other documents relating to Roman citizens drawn up in Latin also prompted him to have a Greek translation made of his father's will (P.Diog. 9). The archive thus illustrates the trouble and expense people had to go to to have their status officially documented.

13.7 Fighting Injustice: The Mixed Archive of Flavius Abinnaeus, Army Commander at Dionysias

The final archive in this chapter takes us to the north-west of the Arsinoite nome during the reign of Constantius II, where Flavius Abinnaeus, a Roman cavalry officer, was commander of the fort at Dionysias between AD 342 and 351 (Bell et al. 1962, pp. 19–21). Over 80 documents survive in the archive (TM Arch 1, AD 325–375), informing us about the career and duties of this military officer and his bitter conflict with his superior (Pestman 1989b). A draft

of a petition in Latin recounts the events, summarizing his career before his appointment as *praefectus alae* at Dionysias (P.Abinn. 1): after serving 33 years in the *vexillatio* of Parthian archers at Diospolis Magna in the province of the Thebaid (the south of Egypt), he was sent to the imperial court in Constantinople, first in AD 336 and probably again in 339/40, which brought him into contact with the emperor and his entourage. In AD 341, when he was aged around 54, he was officially promoted to *praefectus alae* at Dionysias, but on his arrival at the office of the *comes et dux Aegypti* Valacius (the chief military commander), he was told that other men had been appointed to the same command (Barnes 1985). After writing to the emperor, Abinnaeus became the commanding officer at Dionysias (P.Abinn. 44), but two years later, Valacius tried to remove him from his post, this time claiming that he had reached the end of his term and should relinquish his position (P.Abinn. 2). After traveling to Constantinople to protest (P.Abinn. 58–59), Abinnaeus was reinstated at Dionysias in AD 346, where he remained until 351, although his relationship with his superior remained tense. After his term of duty, when he was about 65, he retired to Philadelphiea, taking his papers with him.

The archive, which contains both his official and his private paperwork, consists primarily of correspondence with his fellow officials. Most of the letters are addressed to Abinnaeus, and ask him to secure promotions for themselves or their friends and family, some even implicitly offering him bribes (e.g. P.Abinn. 49). Others contain instructions from the *dux*, his superior, which he frequently ignored. As commanding officer, Abinnaeus was in charge of keeping peace and order in the nome, which involved not only frontier control, but also the policing of the countryside: 14 petitions survive in the archive, from the towns of Theadelphia, Philagris, Narmouthis, Theoxenis, Berenikis, and Hermopolis, all in the vicinity of the fort; most complain about misconduct by soldiers (P.Abinn. 44–57).

As well as being in charge of the nome's supervision, Abinnaeus was also responsible for the daily administration and working of the fort, and therefore had to deal with requests for escorts or leave, the recruitment of soldiers, and fiscal matters: among his papers are documents concerning the collection of the *annona*, a tax paid by local farmers for the maintenance of the army (e.g. P.Abinn. 66–70: lists of tax contributions collected village by village).

Abinnaeus' private papers include letters concerning the management of his estates, leases, title deeds, and private accounts. He was married to Nonna alias Polyetion, an Alexandrian woman who owned houses in Alexandria and Philadelphiea. They had two sons, Constantius and Domnus, and another child whose name is lost. Three documents relate to Nonna's family (P.Abinn. 62–64), revealing tense relationships (Vandorpe et al. Verreth 2015, pp. 140–142).

The archive of Flavius Abinnaeus, comprising both official and private papers, gives us a unique insight into the paperwork involved in the running of a garrison, the role played by the army in tax collection, and the interactions between soldiers and the inhabitants of nearby towns. It also sheds light on the intrigues that went on in the imperial administration, and the trouble and time taken by a soldier to obtain justice against his superior.

13.8 Conclusion

The archives in this chapter provide a “bottom up” view of the administration from the Ptolemaic to the Byzantine Period, illuminating the complexity of the bureaucratic machine and the extent of its hold on people's daily lives. Under the early Ptolemies, the concern

with maximizing revenue had already led to precise and – to a certain degree – centralized recordkeeping, but it was not until the mid-second century BC that attempts were undertaken to make the registration of legal transactions more uniform. Under Roman rule, the bureaucratic tradition reached a peak of systematization, as noted in Rowlandson (1998, p. 13): “Everybody and everything were counted and recorded: the human population through the house-to-house census (used as the basis for the poll tax) and declarations of birth and death, their property through declarations to the *bibliophylakes* (property-record keepers) and various kinds of land registers, their animals through declarations of livestock.” The strict procedures and official status categories imposed on the population required an enormous bureaucratic effort from both officials and private individuals, burdening them – literally – with mountains of paperwork and hindering an efficient working of the administration, as illustrated by the famous Nestnephis lawsuit archive (TM Arch 151), documenting a long and bitter dispute between Nestnephis and Satabous over the ownership of some empty plots of land in the village of Soknopaiou Nesos. Satabous claimed to have bought them in AD 11, but a search of the archive at Alexandria in AD 15 could not produce the sale contract. Since local notaries had apparently failed to register the contract at the central record office, it had no legal value, and Satabous was forced to pay a large sum of money to become the legitimate owner of the land (Kelly 2011, esp. pp. 2–4). Starting from the early third century AD, efforts were therefore made to improve bureaucratic efficiency and continuity, but it was not until the reign of Diocletian that the administrative structures were successfully transformed, easing the burden imposed by the state on bureaucrats and individuals (Palme 2009, pp. 379–387).

FURTHER READING

Manning (2003a) provides a good overview of landholding in Ptolemaic Egypt; chapter 5 is particularly illuminating, discussing the structure of the Ptolemaic bureaucracy and its hold over land. Palme (2009) gives an overview of the different types of documentary papyri (both of private and public nature) from the Ptolemaic to the Byzantine Period. Posner’s (1972) *Archives in the Ancient World*, chapter 5, still offers the best introduction to recordkeeping in Greco-Roman Egypt, illuminating the bureaucratic nature of Egyptian society. Vandorpe’s (2009) “Archives and Dossiers” is an essential guide for readers who want to venture into the world of papyrus archives, offering insight into their typology, composition, and, above all, relevance for the study of daily life in Egypt. *Trismegistos, Papyrus Archives in Greco-Roman Egypt* is an up-to-date online gazetteer of all identified archives from Greco-Roman and Byzantine Egypt, with detailed descriptions and references to further literature.

Life in a bureaucratic society is also well attested in the following archives. *Private*: Dryton, Apollonia, and descendants (TM Arch 74, 199–80 BC); L. Pompeius Niger (TM Arch 195, AD 31–64); Flavius Patermouthis (TM Arch 37, AD 475–613). *Official*: Glaukos, policeman of Mouchis (TM Arch 384, BC 226–218); administrative archive of Theadelphia (TM Arch 247, AD 98–225); Apollinarios, *strategos* of Panopolis (TM Arch 229, AD 298–300). *Mixed*: Apollonios, *strategos* (TM Arch 19, AD 44–121); Flavius Isidoros, *officialis*, and *beneficiarius* (TM Arch 89, AD 368–389). *Lawsuit*: Erbstreit (TM Arch 81, 199–88 BC); G. Iulius Agrippinus (TM Arch 91, AD 103–148).

PART IV

**DEVELOPING
THE ECONOMIC STRENGTH
OF THE NILE COUNTRY**

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Monetization of the Countryside

Sitta von Reden

14.1 Monetization and State Development

Monetization, or the spread of state-controlled money, is a fundamental element of state development. Not only do governments have to assume the power of issuing, controlling, and guaranteeing the value of the monetary medium, but the medium also has to be accepted by users who trust in a degree of state authority. In Antiquity, the main monetary medium was precious metal coinage, which had intrinsic value. In Egypt, however, from the Ptolemaic Period onward, not only was a lighter silver coinage made equivalent to heavier coins circulating outside the country, but for long periods of time the main coinage was made of bronze and had comparatively little intrinsic value (Table 14.1). The fact that such coinages functioned as stable representatives of value shows that the monarchy was able to enforce them. This being a unique monetary system in the Hellenistic world, it was part of a particular kind of state-building in Egypt (Manning 2008, 2010, pp. 137–138).

Before the Macedonian conquest, Egypt had a limited monetary economy. It was based on grain used for fiscal and rental obligations, as well as in exchange. Grain was certainly a kind of money and not just an object of barter, for it was transacted and accounted for in standardized units. A second type of money, less heavily used for fiscal purposes, was precious metal bullion. It appears in Egyptian hoards as so-called “Hacksilber” (smashed pieces of silver bars, objects, and foreign coins) and in marriage agreements from the ninth century BC onward (the earliest example is the Hieratic P.Ehevertr. 1 from 879 BC; Lüddeckens 1960). In the Egyptian contracts, certain sums of precious metal are listed as matrimonial gifts, largely kept for the event of divorce. According to these documents, the purity and value of bullion were certified not by the pharaoh, but by the treasury of the Memphite temple of Ptah. Foreign inhabitants, such as Armenian military occupants in

Table 14.1 Ptolemaic coinage.

	<i>Silver coins</i>	<i>Bronze coins</i>
<i>Silver standard</i>		
Ptolemy I	Stater (tetradrachm) 1 stater = 14.3 g Drachma 1 drachma = 3.57 g	Subsidiary currency Three denominations up to 2 obols Conversion silver into bronze coins: 1 silver stater = 4 bronze dr. (or 12 diobols)
Ptolemy II	Idem	Six denominations up to 1 dr. (1 bronze dr. = 69 g)
Ptolemy III	Silver coinage withdrawn	Independent and now only currency New denominations added and appearance improved
End reign Ptolemy IV	—	Conversion silver-bronze coins: 1 silver dr. = 2 – 4 bronze dr.
<i>Bronze standard</i>		<i>Reformed bronze coinage</i>
Ptolemy V 197 BC	—	Monetary reform: bronze now the standard New metrology and new value: prices and taxes $\times$ 60 New denominations and iconography: 8–10 denominations between 2.5 and 40 dr. (4–40 g) Ratio of silver to bronze fluctuates Face value of coins increased
Ptolemy VI and later	155/154 BC: minting of silver resumed	
Ptolemy XII	Fineness of silver reduced by 10%	
Cleopatra VII	Fineness of silver reduced to less than 50%	Only 2 denominations: 40 and 80 dr.

Currency and weights: 8 chalkoi = 1 obol or Eg. *tb*^c; 6 obols = 1 drachma = $\frac{1}{2}$ Eg. kite (*qd*); 4 drachmas = 1 stater (tetradrachm) = 1 *denarius*; 20 drachmas = 1 Eg. deben (*dbn*); 100 drachmas = 1 mna; 6000 drachmas = 1 talent or Eg. *krkr*.

Elephantine and Greek immigrants, seem to have used shekels and drachmas in their social and economic environments. Also, members of the Egyptian elite handled Greek and Persian coins for trade and exchange, while Persian satraps and some of the later Egyptian pharaohs seem to have minted imitation Athenian tetradrachms and smaller silver or bronze coins to pay foreign mercenaries (for taxes in the Late Period reckoned in money, see Muhs 2005a, pp. 1–6). Egypt before the Greek conquest had, one might say, several types of “limited purpose money,” reflecting the diverse authority structures of the country (for this and the following, see von Reden 2007, pp. 31–117).

When Alexander conquered the satrapy in 332 BC, stationing troops in the capital and border towns of Egypt, Macedonian coinage entered the country in larger quantities.

The use of coined money increased in the 320s, when Alexandria was built and some taxes were levied in cash. When Ptolemy took over the satrapy, and even more so under his kingship, coined money spread into wider transactional cycles. It did not replace other forms of payment, such as rental and tax payments in grain, but over time, the cash economy transformed their nature. This chapter explores the development of the monetary economy based on coinage and its role in the political and economic transformation of Egypt under Greek and Roman rule.

Monetization does not mean just the introduction of coinage. First, the pre-Ptolemaic monetary economy did not simply disappear. Second, one of the constraints of both the Ptolemaic and Roman economy in Egypt was the lack of silver resources in Egypt itself. Lighter-weight and base metal coinages (e.g. bronze) made up for that lack to a certain extent. But, in practice, money was often used just as a unit of account, rather than in the form of coined money. There were also customary exchange rates for the conversion of various types of grain into cash and vice versa, to make commutation of wages, rental obligations, and interest rates easier. Monetary transactions could be increased through credit, delayed payments, and “giro” transfers from one account to another. Such practices occur so frequently at the managerial, interpersonal, and state level that they cannot be regarded as instances of just personal shortage.

Monetization of the countryside, moreover, cannot be considered independently of the economy of Alexandria. Although the Mediterranean capital was regarded as a world apart, and the Alexandrians as distinct from the Egyptians in the Nile Valley, economically there was close interdependence (see Buraselis et al. 2013 for the Ptolemaic Period, Rowlandson and Harker 2004, pp. 80–81 for the Roman). For one thing, large parts of the Delta and Fayum served as a hinterland of the city, creating a market for food and labor from the countryside. For another, Alexandria and the Pelusian port at the border to Syria were among the largest commercial centers in the Mediterranean. Without the dynamic development of trade and the influx of money that resulted from it, the task of monetizing the countryside could never have been achieved. Unfortunately, the papyri give us only the rural side of the relationship.

Our evidence for monetary development in Egypt is both numismatic and papyrological. Some literary and epigraphic texts are important for particular questions. Papyri and coins, however, speak a very different language, and often point us to very different aspects of the monetary economy. Papyri come from the *chora* and relate in large part to a literate, Greek-speaking population concentrating in Middle Egypt, especially the Fayum and adjacent areas (but see also the Demotic accounts and surveys in P. Agri. Dem. from the Fayum); bilingual evidence (Greek-Demotic) from Upper Egypt, though less abundant, is also increasingly used for questions of monetary history. Coin finds are more widely spread and recovered in excavations and hoards throughout Egypt (Faucher 2011, with maps). But coins and papyri are not simply complementary. Coins help us to understand state policy, patterns of circulation, and, to some extent, coin output, but they tell us almost nothing about their users or the role of cash transactions vis-à-vis other forms of exchange. Coins, moreover, are deposits: dumped, hidden in times of danger, or reserved for later spending. A lack of hoards and lost coins reflects peaceful and stable times, rather than a lack of coinage in circulation (Meadows 2014). Thanks to fruitful cooperation between numismatists and papyrologists, both have become aware of the limitations of their evidence.

14.2 The First Ptolemaic Coinage

The opening of a Ptolemaic mint in Memphis is dated to 326/5 BC – several years into the Macedonian rule (Mørkholm 1991, pp. 48, 52). Until then, the satrapy used Macedonian coinage and coins from Alexander's other imperial mints. To judge from the contents of a large hoard closed in 318 BC and found at Demanhur about 40 miles south-east of Alexandria, coin use in Egypt at that time was still dominated by the Alexander coinage produced in Amphipolis (Macedonia) and elsewhere (Price 1991, pp. 41–42; Mørkholm 1991, p. 64). Of the total amount of silver tetradrachms known from this hoard, only 4.45% were minted in Egypt (Duyrat 2005, table 10).

The circulation of coins in Egypt was at first very limited. Reliable details of the infamous administration under Cleomenes of Naucratis between 331 and 323 are unknown, but one of his major financial projects must have been the building of Alexandria (Le Rider 1997). Pseudo-Aristotle suggests that under Cleomenes, the nome administrators (*nomarchai*) were liable for cash taxes procured from the sale of grain for export (*Oeconomica* 2.2.33). The same text implies that Cleomenes also extracted money from priests and wealthy residents engaged in commerce. Cash was used, it seems, by people engaged in an economy of scale, and at the top of the local hierarchy. There is no indication that taxes were collected in cash from the Egyptian population, nor that the peasantry was drawn into the commercial transactions generating it.

Unfortunately, we also know little about the administration under the first Ptolemy, when papyrological documentation was still scarce. Numismatic evidence can compensate to a certain extent. The most remarkable step taken by this king was a significant reduction of the weight standard of the gold and silver coinage. As Egypt had no silver mines, and temple treasuries do not seem to have been plundered by the conquerors, monetary metal had to be gained from circulating coinage. The reduction in weight of the tetradrachm happened gradually, and probably without most of its users noticing. But shortly after Ptolemy I was proclaimed king, his tetradrachm was lighter by 3 g than the Attic tetradrachm widely used in the Mediterranean and other kingdoms (Figure 14.1).

For some time, the royal mint must have competed with private hoarders to withdraw the more valuable coins from circulation, but soon a law was passed that all foreign coins must be exchanged in Alexandria before they could be used in Egypt. The scale and



Figure 14.1 Silver tetradrachm of Ptolemy I, Alexandria, 305–285 BC, Ptolemy/eagle on thunderbolt, diameter 26 mm. Source: ANS 1944.100.75453. © American Numismatic Society.

practice of this currency exchange can be glimpsed from a later papyrus dealing with a similar situation for gold coinage:

Demetrios to Apollonios greeting ... I have received 57000 (pieces, drachmas) in gold which I minted and returned. We might have received many times as much, but as I wrote to you before, the foreigners who come here by sea, and the merchants and agents from the provinces and others bring both their good local coins and the *trichrusa* (gold coins worth 60 silver drachmas) to be made into new coins in accordance with the royal ordinance (*prostagma*) which orders us to receive and remint them. (P.Cairo Zen. I 59021, 258 BC)

The prohibition of foreign coinage in a country was unusual – although not entirely unknown – in the Greek world, where valid coins tended to circulate freely in all markets as long as people would accept them. Nonetheless, partly because of the dearth of precious metal in Egypt, but also because of an administrative infrastructure that allowed efficient enforcement, a so-called “closed currency” system was maintained throughout the Ptolemaic Period until at least the time of Diocletian in AD 296.

The first Ptolemaic coinages included small change in bronze. A silver tetradrachm bought about two artabas (c. 80 l) of grain in the *chora*, sufficient to feed a person and some dependent family members for two months. The bronze pieces were worth 1 chalkous, 4 chalkoi (= ½ obol), 1 obol, and 2 obols (Woolf 2013; but Picard 1998 suggests three denominations of 1 chalkous, 2 chalkoi, and 4 chalkoi (= ½ obol), as in the Macedonian system).

A seminal change was implemented under Ptolemy II: within one comprehensive monetary reform in 261/0 BC, the size of bronze coins was increased and the number of denominations expanded (Lorber 2012). There were now six values up to 1 drachma, and each piece was heavier by one-third than its previous equivalent (Figure 14.2a). The largest bronze pieces were 4.2 cm in diameter and above, and had a target weight of 69 g (Woolf 2013, p. 81; extant pieces vary between 65 and 100 g – Faucher and Picard 2012 suggest



Figure 14.2a Bronze drachm(?) of Ptolemy II, Alexandria, 285–246 BC, Ammon Zeus/eagle, face reverted, diameter 47 mm. Source: ANS 1944.100.75948. © American Numismatic Society.

that this weight band spans across two different denominations). The bronze coinage of Ptolemy II was highly exceptional in both its appearance and its function. No base-metal coins of that size had previously been minted in the Greek world, nor had bronze coinages ever assumed more than subsidiary functions within silver currencies. In Egypt, by contrast, they provided an equally important means of exchange as the silver currency, and even large payments were now made in bronze. Only in some transactions – mostly payments to the state – was an *agio* of 2 obols per tetradrachm added when they were supposed to be conducted in silver (*pros argyrion*) but were actually paid in bronze. It was the beginning of a new coin era in Egypt. This system developed further under Ptolemy III, who added new denominations and improved the appearance of the coinage. In the last quarter of the third century BC, bronze coinage was independent, and virtually the only currency used in Egypt.

14.3 Mobilizing Coinage

The coin reform of Ptolemy II was part of broader administrative and economic changes by which the state tightened its grip on the resources of the country. The immediate motivation may have been the financial loss caused by the Chremonidean War between 268/7 and 262/1 BC and the preparation for the war against Antiochus III in Syria from 260 onward. But the scope of change suggests broader aims, as well as the confidence of a state developing its fiscal capacity. First, a new capitation tax, known as the salt tax, was introduced in the mid-260s, to which all inhabitants, male and female (with a few privileged exceptions), were liable (Clarysse and Thompson 2006, 2, pp. 36–89). This replaced an older tax, known as the yoke tax, for which only men had been liable, and which does not seem to have had the same significance in the fiscal and political system of the state (see Chapter 10). The salt tax was a small sum per person, but it was connected to a general census and linked up with various other monetary taxes. Its socially penetrating importance may be gleaned from a marriage contract in which the responsibility for the tax is part of the agreement:

... Philotera will come to join Akesandros on Tybi 1 (February 21).

[Akesandros son of Ni]kanor, Macedonian, makes an agreement with Philotera daughter of Philon, [Cretan,] to take you as my wife and to provide for you the clothing of [... that] I have, shoes, ... Akesandros will feed her, making provisions for her salt-tax... (BGU VI 1463 with Berichtigungsliste, 246 BC, Elephantine)

The salt tax was assessed in silver (*pros argyrion*), but in practice often paid in bronze. Arguably, its importance for the king lay as much in its symbolic role as a universal tax as in the actual sums that were raised (Clarysse and Thompson 2006, 2, p. 89). Not only did it require a new census structure, with all its symbolic implications, but it also entailed a new coinage, with which a large number of small sums could be rendered (von Reden 2007, pp. 62–67; the denominational system suggested there is probably now superseded by Woolf 2013, but the connection between salt-tax rates and denominations of bronze coinage remains arguable). It is most likely that the coinage reform was an immediate

response to the new demand for coins and small denominations. The fiscal, political, and monetary impact of the salt tax and the production of bronze coinage were inseparably linked.

At roughly the same time, further administrative changes took place. The Papyrus Revenue Laws (P.Rev.) contains various royal regulations concerning the collection and farming out of major cash revenues. Not accidentally, they concern three major sources of income: the revenues from the oil monopoly, the tax on vineyards and orchards (*apomoira*), and the income from money-changing banks, all of which were farmed out to private entrepreneurs. Although scholars agree that neither the *apomoira* nor state monopolies and banks were new at that time, it is certain that the Revenue Laws clarified procedures, which increased income and asserted administrative power. The oil monopoly, which the Ptolemies had taken over from the temples, was now a completely monetized procedure. All workers' wages, production costs, and sales proceeds were to be assessed, procured, paid for, and transferred to the banks in cash. All payments were to be made *pros chalkon* (or *chalkos isonomos*); that is, in bronze, without an agio. This suggests that oil production was an economic sphere that was not penetrated by large amounts of silver coinage but rather of bronze. This implies that the revenue remained in the nomes for local spending only.

The Revenue Laws also clarified procedures for the collection of the *apomoira*, a tax that in the early third century BC was collected from vineyards in kind, but from orchards in cash (Clarysse and Vandorpe 1998a; see also Chapter 10). The *apomoira*, destined for the cult of the deified Queen Arsinoe, was in terms of size and meaning one of the most important taxes in Ptolemaic Egypt. The Revenue Laws set out how the relationship between the nome administrators, who were in charge of the assessment and collection of the tax, the tax farmers, who guaranteed their financial volume, and the royal banks, which registered the contracts, ran the accounts, stored the money, and made the disbursements, was to be organized. It was a scheme that guaranteed the state a regular and predictable monetary income, ensured by the mutual control of entrepreneurially spirited tax-farming companies on the one hand and state institutions – nome administrators and royal banks, on the other.

Royal banks are attested first in P.Hib. I 29, dated to c. 265 BC (Bogaert 1994a, p. 50). In P.Rev., a few years later, they seem well established, and it is almost certain that they were created in connection with monetary taxation under Ptolemy I. They were royal institutions run by state employees, whereas money-changing banks, mentioned in the Revenue Laws under farmed-out businesses, were run by private entrepreneurs guaranteeing an annual income in exchange for a banking license (Bogaert 1994b, pp. 59–77). The institutional models of the royal banks appear to be not only Greek institutions, but also the Egyptian royal and temple treasuries (Muhs 2018).

Stimulation of the monetary economy came also from non-state institutions. Military cleruchs and civil immigrants settled in Middle Egypt around Memphis, the Oxyrhynchite and Hermopolite nomes, and above all the Fayum, which was agriculturally developed under Ptolemy II at the same time as his fiscal and monetary reforms were taking place. Greek landowners adapted to the agrarian conditions of Egypt, but they also introduced Greek practices into the running of their estates. Thus, the management of large estates – such as that of Apollonios, the highest financial official under Ptolemy II, documented by the Zenon archive – was fully monetized (von Reden 2007). With the

exception of rents paid on grain land, wages, rents, transport, and marketing were monetary business. But monetary practice also affected contracts and agrarian systems more widely. A larger number of land leases were now based on fixed-term and fixed-rent agreements rather than share-cropping arrangements, whereby peasants paid a share of the harvest rather than a fixed sum (and thus did not bear the risk of a poor harvest or loss of grain; von Reden 2007, pp. 120–122). A famous incident, analyzed by Bingen (2007a), shows peasants going on strike over just such an arrangement. Bingen (2007b) also describes a series of *papyri* giving us a glimpse of the type of immigrant who made money on the back of the agrarian economy. Such individuals rented land from young cleruchs who were in need of cash, advanced the rent, and sub-let the plots at a higher rate. Some of these men can be traced in other businesses involving monetary loans and advances of cash with a view to profit. Not only did they channel money into the agrarian economy where it was lacking, but like tax-farmers, they also introduced a dynamic, cash-oriented business structure into the traditional, redistributive economy of Egypt.

Urbanization was a further stimulus to monetization. The development of Alexandria into the largest commercial city in the Mediterranean has already been mentioned. But we must also consider the numerous local towns and their markets, which from the beginning of the Ptolemaic Period were centers for the transformation of produce into cash. A significant increase in the number and size of rural *metropoleis* occurred during the Roman Period, but a number of urban foundations are attested under the Ptolemies as well (Müller 2006). These were not only administrative centers providing banking, transport facilities, and legal infrastructure, but like other ancient towns, were centers of consumption for agrarian elites (Préaux 1947 provides a vivid picture of the urban lifestyle of Greek elites in the Early Ptolemaic Period). A number of city foundations on the Red Sea coast, linked to the Nile by desert roads and canals, testify to the expansion of sea routes from Egypt to India and the southern Arabian kingdoms, which were main destinations for a mutual trade in luxuries (Sidebotham 2011, pp. 32–55).

14.4 The Limits of the Monetary Economy

Monetization occurred within the framework of tradition and innovation discussed elsewhere in this volume (see Part III). Two factors constrained the monetary economy of Egypt, although their impact on the overall economy was complex. One was the continuity of tax and rent-extraction on grain land and cereal harvests in kind. Capitation taxes, as just mentioned, were levied in cash, and so were tolls and taxes on the sale of land, processed agricultural produce, fodder-crops, animal husbandry, manufacture, transport, and various other services, leading to the expansion of markets and local exchange. The cereal economy, by contrast – even on large estates – remained mostly free of cash obligations in regard to both taxation and rent extraction. Even wage payments were affected by the economy in kind, insofar as laborers, whether employed in larger households or in public work, received grain or bread allowances (so-called *sitometria*) in addition to their monetary pay (Reekmans 1966). The very real shortage of cash among small tenants and peasants surfaces in the contractual practice of advancing minor sums for seasonal labor – so-called *katerga* loans – which were set off against

the rent in kind at the end of the agrarian year (von Reden 2007, pp. 206–211). Moreover, substitution of cash payments in grain and vice versa was highly facilitated by an official exchange rate set at 2 drachmas per artaba of wheat by royal edict in the third century BC (P.Col.Zen. I 54).

The continuity of small-peasant proprietors and tenants, not greatly involved in the monetized economy, was another limiting factor. Through the salt tax and some minor monetary taxes on land (a guard tax for the protection of fields and a tax for the upkeep of the dike system), poorer agriculturists had to make some cash transactions. But these were negligible in comparison to what would have been required in rents. As Rowlandson (2001) has pointed out, the amount of annual cash required for small capitation and other monetary taxes was quite easily earned by selling a few artabas of grain. It would have been quite another matter if rents had needed to be financed by the marketing of harvests. Given the great natural supply of grain in Egypt, selling them locally would have been an impossible task. The non-cash sector thus helped to preserve large numbers of peasants, despite the growth of large monetized agrarian enterprises. The small degree of cash involvement required from each stands out as a strategy of governance rather than of fiscal economics.

There is every indication that Egyptian estate owners and the native temples latched onto the cash economy very quickly in the first generations of Ptolemaic rule (Manning 2008, pp. 105–109; Muhs 2005a; Faucher 2011). Indeed, it has recently been shown that more extensive property rights were attached to native temple land than to Greek estates in the Fayum, which may have stimulated comparatively more cash-crop production than on cleruchic or royal land (Monson 2012b, pp. 77–86). Tax receipts and evidence for banks in Thebes suggest that cash taxation fully extended into lesser Hellenized areas in Upper Egypt, despite the fact that in the first generations of Ptolemaic rule, some temples in Upper Egypt maintained their role as tax-collection points alongside the banks, which were less densely distributed there. The distribution of coin hoards also suggests circulation of coinage into geographical zones dominated by the native economy (Lorber 2013). As shown by Greek and Demotic contracts from the south, the use of money was also well established for private transactions, including loans and sales, even in more remote areas; in the case of private loans, a maximum interest rate of 2% per month was fixed by the government. Cash and kind were characteristic of particular economic cycles rather than exclusive to specific ethnic, geographical, or economic groups.

While the new Ptolemaic coinage may have been circulating in all regions and among all ethnic groups, textual evidence is colored by the milieu in which it was written. Greek texts express monetary value using the new Ptolemaic coinage system (mentioning obols, drachmas, staters, mnas, and talents). Egyptian documents, by contrast, continue to use their old, weight-based system of kites and debens, but in an adapted form: the kite (*qd*, ± 9.1 g) and deben (*dbn*) now refer to the new money, in that 1 kite is equal to 2 drachmas, and 1 deben to 20 drachmas; this artificial conversion rate is often mentioned in the document (e.g. “at the rate of 24 obols to 2 kite,” P.Dryton 23; “261 deben 5 kite, that is 1307½ stater,” P.Dryton 12). The units of kite and deben usually refer to bronze money; if silver is meant, this is indicated by the addition “real silver” (*hḏ sp-sn*). Only occasionally do kites (and drachmas and staters) refer to actual weights, as in the case of jewelry and of magical and medical prescriptions.

14.5 Crisis and Development

The third century BC was a period of dynamic state formation and strong government. From the end of the reign of Ptolemy IV, the interdependent factors of state authority and monetary stability changed. In a set of contracts preserved from Tholthis in the Oxyrhynchite nome, dated to 218–214 BC, legal penalty charges (*epitimia*) for unpaid rents jump from the standard rate of 4 drachmas per artaba of wheat to 10 drachmas. There are also references to increased market prices for grain and wine (Maresch 1996, pp. 184–185; von Reden 2007, pp. 71–75). Yet, scholars agree that the sudden leap of *epitimia* was not caused by the same change in real prices. They rather seem to have been the result of monetary manipulation changing the relationship of value between silver and bronze coinage.

Lorber (2013, pp. 136–138) has pointed to the deliberate withdrawal of silver coinage under Ptolemy III. Hoards containing silver coinage become scarce and small in size. Early coins of Ptolemy I and II disappear completely from Egypt, although they continue to circulate in the external possessions of the empire. Ptolemy III markedly improved the appearance of the bronze currency, which was now more precisely minted to target weights and made from an improved alloy. Yet, this did not prevent problems in the payment structure of the country. Under Ptolemy IV, bronze drachmas seem to have been worth no more than half a silver drachma. Any payment that was due *pros argyriōn* was henceforth to be paid in twice the amount of bronze drachmas. Commodity prices for wheat and wine exactly doubled (Maresch 1996, p. 181 for wheat, p. 187 for wine). Yet, it is not entirely clear whether this was a government initiative – that is, an official re-tariff of the face value of bronze coinage – or if in practice bronze denominations were no longer accepted as the equivalent of silver (thus, Reekmans 1951, followed by Maresch 1996; Lorber 2013, p. 145 finds it almost impossible that the face value of an existing coinage could be changed without this change being visibly marked). A papyrus of the Berlin collection (UPZ I 149.32) accounts for a payment of 16 bronze drachmas for a silver tetradrachm at the end of the reign of Ptolemy IV, c. 208–206 BC. Ptolemy V reacted with a full monetary reform, which involved demonetization of all previous bronze coins apart from one, which was countermarked with a new value mark. This system was based on a new metrology, a larger range of much lighter bronze denominations, and a completely new iconography. Its introduction is now dated firmly to 197 BC (Faucher and Lorber 2010, pp. 35–37) (Figure 14.2b).



Figure 14.2b Post-reform bronze coin of Ptolemy V, Alexandria, 205–180 BC, Isis/eagle facing left, diameter 27 mm. Source: ANS 1944.100.78654. © American Numismatic Society.

The new coinage came with an even more fundamental change. Prices and wages in documents from the beginning of the second century BC, as well as standard rates such as *epitimia* (penalty charges), increase by a factor of 60, suggesting that the monetary unit of the bronze drachma was now referring to a new value. This new value may have derived from the customary value relationship between silver and bronze bullion of 1 : 60, meaning that one old bronze obol (1/6 drachma) was now nominally reckoned at 10 drachmas ($\times 60$). Hence, an individual whose orchard was taxed at 1 silver drachma (or at 2 drachmas or more when he or she had paid in bronze) was now due 120 bronze drachmas or more after the monetary reform.

Following from this, monetary units were no longer fractioned on the obol as 1/6 of the drachma, but in the decimal system of 5, 10, 15, etc. drachmas. The physical coin pieces that numismatists relate to these new units ranged between 4 and 40 g in target weight, and had between 8 and 10 denominations. They represented values either between 5 and 100 or, more likely, between 2.5 and 40 drachmas (Faucher and Lorber 2010, pp. 54–56 suggest both possibilities, but the latter seems favorable in view of many extant second-century wages requiring small payments of 2.5 and 5 drachmas; Maresch 1996, pp. 192–194).

The new system was introduced in the Thebaid not before the Ptolemies resumed control in 186 BC. Subsequent decades saw several further changes in price levels, but the underlying causes remained the same: the face values of coins were doubled and tripled, and the number of drachmas counted toward the silver stater were increased or reduced. At some point in the middle of the second century BC, up to 20 drachmas were counted toward one “tetradrachm”-stater, while the face-value of bronze coins was tripled, leading to bronze prices for a silver stater in the range of 2000–2400 drachmas (Maresch 1996, pp. 195–198 for the second and first centuries; von Reden 2007, p. 75).

Regular annual minting of silver tetradrachms was resumed in 155/4 BC. However, this did not reverse the now established relationship between bronze and silver coinage and accounting practice. The bookkeeping of a royal bank, dating to the 140s and 130s BC, shows how people made payments in silver and even gold coins, but these had to be converted by the bank into bronze, and the rates could fluctuate even in the course of a single day (P.Herakl.Bank; see Chapter 17). Under Ptolemy XII, the fineness of the silver coinage, which had always remained quite pure, was reduced by 10%; this probably went unnoticed among its users. Cleopatra VII debased the coinage more radically to less than 50% fineness, or a mere 5.75 g silver per tetradrachm. Silver coins became noticeably lighter, and the number of bronze denominations was reduced to two fractions, one carrying the value mark of 80 and the other 40 (drachmas) (Lorber 2012, p. 228).

Explanations for the instabilities of the monetary system from the third century BC onward are controversial. Real price inflation cannot have been a major factor (Cadell and Le Rider 1997 suggest real inflation; Cavagna 2010 is more differentiated; von Reden 2007, pp. 75–78 gives the arguments against inflation). The main question that remains to be answered is whether the various new systems were based on state policy or were a governmental response to popular pressure. Royal bankers liable for the transfer of tax money to the central treasury may have played a part in the demand for a new system, as they were the first to get into trouble if there was any unpredictable discrepancy between the tax volume guaranteed in silver by contract and the actual volume collected in bronze coinage. It is at this level that further investigation needs to take place.

14.6 Roman Transformation

The monetary system remained unchanged when Egypt became a Roman province. Under Augustus, no silver coins were minted in Alexandria. This might have been due to the disengagement of the Roman government in provincial monetary affairs in the late Republican and early Imperial Periods (Burnett et al. 1992, pp. 7–8; for the development of Alexandrian coinage under the Julio-Claudians, Burnett et al. 1992, pp. 688–692; for the development up to the Severans, Christiansen 1988). But Augustus is also said to have seized all precious metal reserves from Egypt (Suetonius, *Divus Augustus* 41), and the lack of minting could have been a deliberate policy not to waste silver on that province (Christiansen 1988, p. 13). Tiberius continued the policy of seizure when resuming minting in Alexandria, but at a reduced silver content of 4 g per tetradrachm (Figure 14.3a). In metallurgical terms, this was not a silver but a billon coinage consisting in all but its veneer of a bronze and copper alloy. Claudius reduced it further to 3 and Nero to 2 g; there then followed a bout of re-minting in which all prior Ptolemaic and Tiberian coins were demonetized.

It seems that the province once again was deliberately drained of its precious metal reserves by governmental act. The Neronian standard remained in use until Marcus Aurelius halved the silver content of the tetradrachm once again. From the mid-third century AD onward, the weight of the coins was noticeably reduced, and their silver content was halved again. Output considerably increased, while weight and fineness further declined, until the silver of the coinage was no more than a wash of less than 0.05 g. From the Claudian issues onward, Alexandrian billon tetradrachms were equivalent to the Roman silver *denarius* (CPJ II, pp. 112–114), whereas elsewhere a *denarius* was equivalent to 1 drachma. Because of the closed currency system, Roman and Egyptian coins did not mix in the market, but their relationship will have mattered when Egyptian taxes were transferred to Rome, likely in the form of high-value gold coins (1 *aureus* = 25 *denarii*) (Rathbone 1996).

Bronze coinage continued to play the main role in daily transactions. The obol system was resumed, although 28–30 obols were now reckoned to 1 silver tetradrachm, which can be explained by a (flexible) agio, known as the *prosdia graphomena*, now regularly added in payments of bronze toward silver (Maresch 1996, pp. 110–133; summarized in Rathbone 1996, pp. 260–261). In some documents, mostly in Demotic, bronze obols



Figure 14.3a Billon tetradrachm of Tiberius, Alexandria, AD 20–21, Tiberius/*divus Augustus*, diameter 27 mm. Source: ANS 1944.100.69590. © American Numismatic Society.

were reckoned according to the higher decimal face values known from the Ptolemaic Period; 300 dr. were equivalent to 1 silver drachma, and 40 dr. to 1 obol. In AD 260, bronze coinage was terminated, probably due to a lack of bronze, as this was now needed to mint billon.

The Roman administration of Egypt also inherited from the Ptolemies their double banking system, divided into public banks (*demosiai trapezai*) on the one hand and privately run banks (*trapezai idiotikai*) on the other. Yet, while privately run banks had played a subordinate role under the Ptolemies, they became the wheels of the commercial economy of Roman Egypt, leaving public banks in charge of tax money and public expenditure only (Bogaert 1994c). Thus, while there were noticeable Ptolemaic continuities, there was also change. The influence of Rome on the currency was minor in comparison to its impact on the economy. One of the major initiatives under Augustus was the full privatization of temple land and a reduction of the land tax to a relatively minor flat rate (Rathbone 2007a, pp. 701–705 for the increase of private land in the Fayum, p. 717 for taxation). The dismissal of the Alexandrian court, on which the agrarian economy of Egypt had depended, removed the patrimonial management structures that had characterized even large estates under the Ptolemaic monarchy (Manning 2003a, pp. 111–118). The increase of private property rights, the introduction of a different fiscal regime, and the changing nature of landholding in the Roman imperial system are thought to have encouraged investment, market production, and economic growth (Rathbone 2007a; on market development, Monson 2012b). Improved legal supervision allowed better enforcement of contracts, better protection of property rights, and better conditions for the negotiation of tenancy contracts (Kehoe 1997). Mediterranean trade and markets boomed under the Roman Empire, and Alexandria became a nodal point in that network. Urban development of rural *metropoleis* and the capital of Alexandria are evidence for the increasing spending power of provincial elites, whose economic base was market-oriented production on estates large enough to spread over several nomes (Rathbone 1991). The scale of trade and monetized business in the second century can be gauged from a letter related to a single loan extended for a trade journey to India, which totaled almost seven million drachmas in value (SB XVIII 13167; Rathbone 2001).

The immense demand for money in Egypt continued to be insufficiently covered by coinage. Credit, cashless transfers between personal and bank accounts, and other bookkeeping procedures marked the payment structure at all levels of society, but likely particularly within the economy of scale (Rathbone 1991, pp. 265–330). Wheat continued to be used as a means of payment and a store of wealth, and continued to be transferred and exchanged like cash. Forming a major form of tax revenue for the Roman state, it affected markets and peasants in the ways already suggested. Yet, it also reduced the pressure on coinage, which was indispensable for taxation purposes.

14.7 Crisis and Development Again

Roman Egypt experienced several monetary crises in the course of the Imperial Period. Prices doubled in the wake of the Antonine plague (c. AD 167–179) that reduced the Egyptian population by an estimated 20–30%. The effects on agrarian and urban production,

as well as on the tax volume, were catastrophic. The price increase attested in the papyri was most likely linked to that economic turmoil, including the fiscal implications it had for the Roman government, rather than to the wider monetary problems in the Roman Empire, as has often been argued. Marcus Aurelius reduced the silver content of the Alexandrian silver drachma once again, but such debasement was nothing new, and had never previously affected prices (see Rathbone 1996, p. 334 for discussion). Whether the years after the plague were times of prosperity for the survivors may be disputed, but the suppliers of urban markets were clearly winners of the situation. Prices returned to normal within one generation.

The monetary problems of the Roman Empire during the third century arrived late in Egypt. Under the Severans, average prices in Egypt seem to have been a little higher than in the previous 150 years. Given that Egypt formed a separate monetary zone with a long history of poor silver coinage, the imperial debasement did not affect prices in the same way that it might have done in other parts of the empire. In the early 270s, however, there was a sudden and very noticeable roughly 10-fold jump in wages, rents, and the price of commodities such as wheat, wine, animals, and houses (see Rathbone 1996, p. 332 for tabular presentation of the evidence). The minutes of a town-council meeting in Oxyrhynchos mention problems in producing requisitioned textiles for the government, because of the “price increase of the materials and the wage increase of the employees” (P.Oxy. XII 1414; Rathbone 1996, p. 333). Prices stabilized at the new level thereafter, until the Egyptian monetary system came to an end in AD 296.

The price increase of the 270s has been explained either with reference to debasement and inflation in the Roman Empire or in terms of problems specific to Egypt. The coin reform of Aurelian in 274/5, which is thought to have attempted to re-establish confidence in the stability of money, may have been a trigger of problems in Egypt. The reform reintroduced the denarius system, which had been superseded by repeated debasement and the creation of new, overvalued denominations from the Severans onward. It also linked the *denarius communis*, a better coin than the debased and overvalued “antoninianus” introduced by Caracalla, back to the *aureus*, which Aurelian minted as a full-weight gold coin of 99% fineness. In the wake of this reform, Alexandria produced an unprecedented volume of new tetradrachms. Yet, it is unlikely that the new level of coin output affected prices in the way the quantity theory of money would suggest (Howgego 1995, p. 121 ff.). Egypt had always suffered from an undersupply of coins. Neither the Appianus estate (known to us in detail from its third-century archives) nor interest rates in the third century show any signs of inflation (Rathbone 1991, 2007a; van Minnen 2008 for credit). If anything, an enhanced coin supply may have positively influenced the economy.

It is much more likely that the way in which the tetradrachm was linked to the *aureus*, necessary for tax transfers to Rome, began to cause problems (see Rathbone 1996). Retariffing this relationship at short intervals, as will have happened between the reigns of Gordian and Aurelian, must have created massive discrepancies between the tax volume guaranteed at the beginning of the tax year and its value at the end of the same. Several private contracts dated between 266 and 296 stipulate payments to be made in either new or old (so-called “Ptolemaic”) coinage, suggesting that there was a need for several different coinages in the cache of individuals in order to meet particular requirements. There is also

a well-known instruction of the *strategos* of the Oxyrhynchite nome to all banks and moneychangers who apparently had closed down their business to accept and exchange all coinage except that which was clearly counterfeit and adulterated (P.Oxy. XII 1411 = Jur. Pap. 73). It seems as though bankers began to panic when the value of coinages came to be tossed around by repeated re-tariff against the *aureus*. It is within this scenario, rather than in terms of inflation, that the price rise of the 270s needs to be viewed.

14.8 A New Monetary Era

The closed currency system came to an end in AD 296 as part of the comprehensive monetary and administrative reforms of Diocletian. Egypt became part of the imperial monetary economy, leading to a new monetary era and monetization of a different scale. The number of bronze coins recovered in the city of Alexandria from the 200 years between the Diocletian reforms and the reign of Anastasius (AD 491–518) exceeds the total finds of the previous 600 years of Greco-Roman rule by almost 20% (Meadows 2014). This cannot be explained just by a higher rate of loss. Diocletian re-established a trimetallic coin system, consisting of gold *aurei* (called *solidus*; plural *solidi*), silver coins (called *argenteus*, plural *argentei*) and billon (with a coating of c. 0.16 g silver; *nummi*), and bronze coins (c. 3 g weight) (following Bagnall 1985a, pp. 19–25) (Figure 14.3b). Older coins remained valid, as the Price edict of 301 makes explicit, but were to be used at double their former face value. According to the edict, moreover, gold and silver bullion should be traded at a maximum price of 72 000 *denarii* for a pound of gold and 6000 for a pound of silver. This meant a metal price of 1200 *denarii* for the *solidus* and 62.5 *denarii* for the *argenteus*. The latter, however, was in fact valued at 100 *denarii*, to conform to the customary gold–silver ratio of 1:12. *Nummi* and bronze coins were probably worth 25, 5, and 2 *denarii*. From the time of Constantine onward, the gold *solidus* became the standard coin on which the monetary system was based, but it had a very high value that fluctuated according to demand and supply.

The denominational terms of the new coin system were not quickly adopted in Egypt, where drachms and talents continued to dominate, despite referring to Roman coins and values. The low-value bronze coins, moreover, remained the most important element of the currency in Egypt, as they had always been.



Figure 14.3b Bronze *nummus* issued by Maximian, Trier, AD 296/7, Diocletian/genius standing, diameter 24.5 mm. Source: ANS 1944.100.5877. © American Numismatic Society.

In another bout of price rise, continuing throughout the fourth century, the accounting values attached to these coins were extremely high (see Bagnall 1985a for a convincing, although not uncontroversial, explanation of the price rise; for a brief discussion, see Howgego 1995, pp. 127–128). Gold was the reference point of the bronze units, although its own purchasing power steadily increased in comparison to base metal money. Gold and silver were by no means absent in Egypt, as compulsory purchases for the extraction of precious metal by imperial authority show (Bagnall 2003b). At a certain level of society, the gold *solidus* created new monetary unity and security of wealth across the empire, as well as increased stability for long-distance exchange, credit relationships, and taxation. But, because of its high value and fluctuating price, it became the possession of an economic, military, and bureaucratic imperial elite. This widened the gap between the masses and the elite, and created new forms of social and economic dependence in the process of which the government played an increasingly lesser role (Depeyrot 2006, p. 240).

FURTHER READING

Thonemann (2015) is the most up-to-date introduction to the use, political meaning, and economic impact of Hellenistic coinage. Manning (2008, 2010) highlights the great importance of monetization and monetary taxation for the formation of the Ptolemaic state. Von Reden (2007) provides more detail and evidence for the argument sketched in this essay. The development of the bronze currency, so vital for understanding monetization in Ptolemaic Egypt, is now well understood thanks to the work of Alexandrian numismatists, conveniently summarized in Meadows (2014). Lorber (2013) provides a very readable overview of the highly technical numismatic discussion related to the transformation of the bronze currency in the second century BC. The Roman monetary economy is best approached by Rathbone (2007a), based on his research on the Appianus estate in the third century (Rathbone 1991) and on price formation in Egypt (Rathbone 1996, 1997). For the coinage of Roman Egypt, the section on Alexandria in Burnett et al. (1992) is authoritative, and provides an outline of the issues under debate. For the development of the imperial currency from the time of Diocletian onward, Bagnall (1985a) and Depeyrot (2006) should be consulted.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Stimuli for Irrigation, Agriculture, and Quarrying

Colin Adams

The diligence of the people in connection with the river goes so far as to conquer nature through diligence. For by nature the land produces more fruit than do other lands, and still more when watered; and by nature a greater rise of the river waters more land; but diligence has often-times, even when nature has failed, availed to bring about the watering of as much land even at the time of the smaller rises of the river as at the greater rises, that is, through the means of canals and embankments. (Strabo 17.1.3, translation Jones, Loeb Classical Library)

The wealth of Egypt lay in its natural resources, the most important of which was water: Egypt was famously described by the Greek historian Herodotus as “the gift of the river” (Herodotus 2.5). The Nile punctuated life and established the pattern of the agricultural year. The annual inundation, the subject of much speculation in ancient writing, but in fact the result of snow melting on the mountains of Ethiopia far to the south, began in Upper Egypt in early June, and reached Lower Egypt some two to four weeks after that. As the water rose, it left the countryside resembling a lake full of islands (Strabo 17.1.5), as seen in the Palestrina mosaic (Meyboom 1995). The flood receded by September, having deposited rich silt and mud, which served to nourish the soil (Herodotus 2.14; Diodorus Siculus 1.34). But the wealth of Egypt was also determined to a large extent by the human response to this natural environment, most particularly the Nile: Egypt’s was a hydraulic society (Butzer 1976). It was this response, most importantly in complex systems of water management and irrigation, that allowed for the systematic exploitation of agricultural resources by the Greeks and Romans, which led Egypt – certainly by the Roman Period – to become the wealthiest, most populous, and most highly urbanized province of the empire.

This chapter will survey the responses of the Greeks and Romans in Egypt to irrigation and the land economy, and will also consider their extraction and use of the country’s rich

mineral resources. The evidence used for the land economy will largely be papyrological (although some archeological evidence testifies to developments in land use and crop introduction), while for mineral resources, we have a rich blend of both textual and archeological evidence. There are limitations to our written evidence, however. Two of the four ecozones in Egypt, the Nile Valley and the Delta, have yielded very little evidence – largely due to the moist environment, which is detrimental to the preservation of papyri; for the third, the Fayum, we have a great deal, but mostly from the villages on the fringe of the fertile zone; for the fourth, the deserts, we have an ever-increasing amount, mostly ostraca, which, combined with archeology, gives an impressive picture.

15.1 Irrigation and Agriculture

The main stimuli to the development of agriculture and the exploitation of land were the demands of the state (feeding troops, supplying the city of Alexandria, creating revenue) and patterns of consumption – what the new Greek and later Roman settlers liked to eat and drink. Under the Ptolemies, new crops (such as durum wheat, which largely replaced the traditional *olyra* (emmer) and new systems of irrigation were introduced; the Fayum was reclaimed – a massive project (Manning 2003a, pp. 99–110; Römer 2017) – and became a hugely important agricultural region, described by Strabo (17.1.35, translation Jones, Loeb Classical Library) thus:

The nome is the most remarkable of all in its appearance, its fertility, and the way it has been developed. It is planted with olives and is the only area to grow large, fully grown olive trees bearing a fine crop; and if the crop were collected in carefully it would produce good oil too ... and it produces plenty of wine, and grain, pulses and many other kinds of crops.

Ptolemaic papyri allow us to establish in detail the pattern of the agricultural year and the central importance of irrigation, which was of primary concern to any government wanting to run Egypt at a profit. Indeed, over the Greco-Roman Period, fluctuations in agricultural production are clearly linked to the failure of central government to control irrigation and regulate agriculture. Crop returns and land reports from the village of Kerkeosiris, for example, reveal a decline in production due to weakness of government (Crawford 1971, p. 106). This is true also for the Late Ptolemaic Period, for we know from Suetonius (*Augustus* 18.2) that one of Augustus' first actions in Egypt was to order the restoration of dikes and canals that had fallen into disrepair. But it is a mistake to think that irrigation was always a matter for central control (the so-called “hydraulic hypothesis”), and that either for the Ptolemies or for the Romans the importance of irrigation demanded centralized control of the land economy. Rather, irrigation was handled at a local level, which meant that agricultural production was likewise run locally (albeit with some central orders and direction). “Its management defied centralization and was handled on a community basis” (Butzer 1976, p. 382).

The management of irrigation and production was a considerable feat, but one repeated in Egypt since time immemorial. In terms of land under cultivation, the figures we

have complicate rather than elucidate. An inscription from the Ptolemaic temple at Edfu suggests a total figure of 9 million arouras – about 25 000 km² (Meeks 1972; translation in Manning 2003a, pp. 245–266). This is simply too high; even by the nineteenth century, an estimated 20 000 km² is seen as a maximum, with 25 000 km² being reached only in the 1950s (Scheidel 2001, p. 220; but Manning 2007, p. 441, n. 24 is more inclined to accept this figure). More plausibly, we might accept a total figure of 20 000 km²: still vast, and capable of sustaining its population very comfortably, with enough to spare for the city of Rome.

Hydraulic matters at local level, therefore, were of primary concern. However, approaches to irrigation differed throughout Egypt, even if the concerns of farmers were similar. In the Nile Valley and Delta, about which we generally know less given the parlous state of our evidence and its haphazard preservation, the river brought irrigation directly, both during and after the annual inundation. The height of the flood was crucial, and our sources largely agree that 16 cubits was ideal (Pliny, *Naturalis Historia* 5.58; see P.Oxy. IX 1211 = Sel.Pap. II 403 (second century), which preserves details of commodities dedicated to the Nile). Low floods could be catastrophic; so too could high ones. An inscription of uncertain date on the staircase of the nilometer at Elephantine records high levels of floods in the reigns of various Roman emperors (SB V 8392 = IGRR I 1290):

Col. A. “- - year of Claudius Caesar, 25 cubits - -
 - - year of Tiberius Caesar, 25 cubits, 3 palms, - -
 9th year of Trajan, - -
 9th year of Tiberius Caesar, 25 cubits, 1 palm, 2 digits.”

Irrigation in the Nile Valley and Delta was therefore largely perennial, but water-lifting devices could be used to supplement the supply from the river as needed. Individual cultivators also used water-raising devices: the shaduf, the sakia, and the newly invented Archimedes screw (Schnebel 1925, pp. 72–73; see Strabo 17.1.30 on the screw, and see Figure 15.1 for a shaduf).

In the Fayum, a depression to the west of the Nile, the early Ptolemies started a huge reclamation project, whence “the Lake” (*Limne*, *P3-ym*) – the old name of the region – was changed into the “Arsinoite nome,” after Queen Arsinoe. Dikes and canals served to direct water toward land farther from the river via the Bahr Yusuf, while the influx of water into the area was regulated by opening or closing sluice gates. The complex irrigation system allowed the water to be held in the fields until its work was done, and – given that the Lake of Moeris lay at a lower level than the Nile – to be effectively drained away so that sowing could commence; this was achieved via a canal draining north toward the Bahr Yusuf (Römer 2017). Importantly, this means that the Fayum was not insulated from the variability of the Nile, and relied on flood-recession deposits of silt just as other arable areas did. Village officials were tasked with the regular inspection of irrigation works: a papyrus from Tebtynis shows a village scribe, a komarch, and village elders on a tour of inspection (P.Tebt. I 13, 114 BC). More senior officials oversaw this inspection: the best example is the role of the *oikonomos*, outlined in an



Figure 15.1 A shaduf. Source: Image courtesy Colin Adams.

exceptionally important text listing his duties (P.Tebt. III 703, late third century BC; discussion in Manning 2003a, pp. 141–146):

[You must inspect] ... and the water conduits which run through the fields and from which the peasant are accustomed to lead water on the land cultivated by each of them, and see whether the water-intakes in to them have the prescribed depth and whether there is sufficient room in them; and similarly the said cuttings from which the intakes pass into the above-mentioned conduits, whether they had been made strong and the entries into them from the river are thoroughly cleaned and whether in general they are in a sound state. (ll. 29–40, translation Hunt)

Papyri in the so-called Zenon archive reveal much about land reclamation in the Fayum and the state's interest in developing the area for its own ends, as a region to settle its loyal servants and mercenaries. It was able to meet these goals by establishing a “regional power base” – and irrigation was the key (Rathbone 1990, p. 112; Römer 2017). The size of the task, and the logistics involved in coordinating workforces, supplies, and animal power, is impressive. We know a reasonable amount about it, for many papyri concern hydraulic matters, and it was

a principal state concern. One important issue is overlooked, however, in the relative abundance of evidence: a good deal of local administration was verbal. The “face-to-face” nature of government is shown clearly in the instructions given to an *oikonomos*:

In your tours of inspection try in going from place to place to cheer everybody up and to put them in better heart: and not only should you do this by words but also, if any of them complain of the village scribes or the komarchs about any matter touching agricultural work, you should make enquiry and put a stop to such things as far as possible. (P.Tebt. III 703.40–49, third century BC, translation Hunt)

Such an approach was surely as much a feature of the Roman Period, as shown by a papyrus from Panopolis in which the *strategos* notes to the president of the city councils that “I gave you orders not only once but also a second time, and many times in writing” (P.Panop.Beatty 1.111–112, AD 300). As such, we often have only a partial view of administration, and one sometimes skewed toward matters where a failure to act had precipitated written instructions.

Among papyri from the Petrie collection in London are preserved the papers of two irrigation engineers, Kleon and Theodoros. These date from the 250/40s BC, and provide essential information on the engineers’ role in the reclamation project (see also Chapter 17). The Fayum was divided into three regions (*merides*), the Themistos, Polemon, and Herakleides (these divisions remained throughout the Roman Period), which were further subdivided into nomarchies, administered by nomarchs, who were in charge of developing irrigation works. These works were supervised by engineers “in charge of the protection of dikes and sluices,” such as Kleon and Theodoros (e.g. P.Kleon 79). The details of one such scheme are contained in a particularly important text from the Zenon archive (P.Lille Gr. I 1 = Pap.Lugd.Bat. 20 Suppl. A). Plots totaling 10000 arouras (about 2750 ha) were reclaimed, divided into smaller plots called *perichomata*, and further subdivided into 250-aroura (c. 70 ha) basins. On the papyrus, this is schematized as a plan incorporating established and new canals and dikes. A total of some 51 600 person days of labor were required, and it has been argued that 500 people would have taken about three and a half months to complete this (probably in January through to late May; see Table 15.1 for an annual calendar of work) (Thompson 1999, p. 112). The large scale of these operations is illustrated by another document, which preserves an estimate for work on 70 000 arouras (almost 20 000 ha), to be carried out by 15 000 laborers. This would represent perhaps 64% of the workforce of the Fayum (Clarysse 1988b; SB XX 14624). The end result of all this was a trebling of the land under cultivation (Manning 2003a, p. 105), which could then be largely run on a local level.

These projects, and indeed the ongoing provision of irrigation, were carried out through a combination of state direction and private initiative. This is shown clearly in papyri recording legal agreements between contractors and the state. Extracts from one example, dating to c. 245 BC, will suffice. Here, the state supplies tools, while the locals provide the labor, under the direction of an engineer:

a contract was given out from the king after public auction through Hermaphilos the *oikonomos* in the presence of Theodoros the engineer (there follows a list of works) ... to take down the bridge at Hieria Nesos and replace the fascines (*paraphryganismos* revetting the embankments

Table 15.1 Agricultural calendar.

<i>Month (Julian/ Egyptian)</i>	<i>Inundation/Irrigation Fayum (Thebaid two weeks earlier)</i>	<i>Agricultural pattern</i>
September/Thoth	Nile flood peaks; dike works; new dikes built, existing dikes shorn up with reeds	Wine vintage complete; dates/fruit picked
October/Phaophi	Flood recedes; dike works continue; workers stand by to repair breaches in irrigation works with reeds	Cereal crops sown; olives gathered; inspection of land and cadastral survey
November/Hathyr	Flood past; dike repairs and vigilance continues	Sowing continues; olives gathered; inspection of land and cadastral survey
December/Choiak	Applications for water to irrigate (Fayum); contracts of dike work; major operations undertaken; appointment of dike and sluice guards	Cultivation continues; final gathering of olives
January/Tybi	Evidence for collapsing walls and dikes; repair work continues	Olive harvest finished; growing season for vines and olives begins
February/Mecheir	Repair work	Preparations for cereal crop harvest; survey of agricultural production
March/Phamenoth	Shoring up of breaches in dikes	Continued preparation for harvest – slack period; survey of agricultural production
April/Pharmouthi	Continued vigilance	Grain harvest begins
May/Pachon	Continued vigilance	Harvest continues; threshing begins; payment of harvest or land taxes
June/Payni	Large-scale irrigation works planned; shifting of earth in advance of imminent flood	Threshing continues; payment of harvest or land taxes
July/Epeiph	Flood rises toward peak; consistent work ensuring security of irrigation works	Threshing ends; vintage begins; new agricultural cycle begins
August/Mesore	Reed and earthworks maintenance; evidence for state contracts	Full flood; vintage

with bundles of brushwood) against the underlying parts and make the opening at the top 8 cubits in width ... On furnishing substantial sureties to the *oikonomos* he shall receive half of the fee for the contract, and when he has done work up to the value of the money given he shall receive the remainder ... There shall be supplied from the king (i.e. government stocks) a sufficient number of mattocks, of which the price shall not be added to the account and which he shall return upon completion of the work, weighing their original weight, and ..., which he shall transport for himself. (P.Kleon 91; Sel.Pap. II 348, translation Hunt)

For the Ptolemaic period, the majority of our evidence for agriculture comes from the Fayum. Both the Ptolemies and the Romans classified land according to its nature, the crops grown, and the tax levied. In the Ptolemaic Period, some features stand out: the existence of “gift-estates” (*doreai*) in the third century BC (most notably that of Apollonios the *dioiketes*, attested in the Zenon papyri); the presence, already mentioned, of Greek soldiers owning cleruchic land; land farmed by royal tenants; and – although some land was privately owned (vineyards) – the lack of evidence of privately owned grain land in the Fayum. *Doreai* and cleruchic land (perhaps accounting for as much as 30% of the cultivatable land in the Fayum) were directly linked to the Ptolemies’ reclamation project, and also to the development of new crops. The best evidence for the administration of land, of all categories – the annual survey of land, crops, and farmers – comes from the late second-century BC archive of Menches, village scribe of Kerkeosiris (Crawford 1971; Verhoogt 1998a,b). This archive provides some information on irrigation, based mainly on canals and basins. It presents a range of crops grown, including garlic, beans, and black cumin (these three largely for local consumption), cereals, green fodder, and grass and other fodder crops, in addition to pasture. Wheat represents over 50% of the total crops grown, and has largely replaced the traditional Egyptian olyra, at least in Kerkeosiris. While it is incorrect to state that olyra fell out of cultivation after the Greek settlement, it certainly declines massively in this period, in response to Greek tastes.

What seems clear from the evidence of Kerkeosiris is that there is a noticeable decline in agricultural production in the late second century BC: perhaps a general pattern, if this evidence is anything to go by. Papyri from the first century BC, as far as they go, provide scanty evidence for the state of the economy. No doubt Egypt’s notorious wealth continued – testament perhaps to the notion that local initiative rather than efficient central government determined the productivity of land (for wealth, see Strabo 17.1.13, citing Cicero, who claimed that in the time of Ptolemy XII Auletes, Egypt paid 12500 talents in tribute). Might this suggest that it was accepted that it was in everyone’s best interest that irrigation and cultivation continue no matter what the state of government? Perhaps, as far as the state was concerned, it was the inability to tax produce efficiently that was the main problem. A similar disjuncture can be seen with the advent of the Roman Period. Given the wealth of evidence for irrigation, land registration, regulation of productions, harvest, transport, and tax in the Roman Period, there is a tendency to assume efficacy. There was a drive toward full cultivation of land and accurate information. Indeed, according to a traditional view, the government of Egypt in the Roman Period was designed solely to extract revenue (Monson 2012b, p. 275). There are a number of problems with this: first, the geography and demography of Egypt always affected production levels and patterns of land tenure and use; second, there is a temptation to see a relatively poor agricultural economy in the Ptolemaic Period compared to the Roman, which has been proven wrong (Manning 2007; Monson 2012b). The reclamation of the Fayum in and of itself is evidence for economic investment and subsequent growth.

In the Roman Period, the management of the mechanisms of agriculture continued to be at the center of life and a major concern of the state, even if it is likely that the central role of the state is exaggerated in the traditional view of a hydraulic society (championed by Rostovtzeff 1966, p. 279, even if he also admits a partnership: “Her prosperity (Egypt) required minutely organized irrigation work before and after the Nile flood, equal distribution of water, drainage of swampy and marshy places, and so forth. Such work could

only be accomplished by the joint efforts of the whole population"). Villagers were subject to the *corvée*, compulsory labor aimed at maintaining irrigation works and ensuring bumper harvests in good years (Bonneau 1993). *Corvée* labor had to be regulated and organized – and luckily we have considerable evidence for this in so-called *penthemeros* certificates (Sijpesteijn 1964; Bonneau 1993, pp. 152–153, 166–168; Kruse 2002, pp. 306–319; Claytor 2013). *Penthemeros* was the obligation to provide five days of labor to the state annually, and was thus a liturgical service. It came to be organized closely by the Roman state in the reign of Trajan, although this is most likely a regularization of existing practice (evidence can be traced back to about AD45). Our latest certificate dates to AD218 (P.Lond. III 1267a, p. 60). The certificates are formulaic, as we would expect, and preserve the following information: the year of issue, the month and days on which work was performed, the locality where the work took place, the villages to which the worker belonged and where the work was carried out (sometimes different), the name of the worker, and the signature of an official. A striking pattern, perhaps not surprisingly, is that the majority by far of the certificates date to the months Payni to Mesore (June to August), when the flood was at its peak, and workers were on high alert.

Collective responsibility was key, and the Roman state may have encouraged this, as can be seen in a well-known text from Oxyrhynchos dating to the reign of Probus:

Ulpius Aurelius to the *strategoi* and *dekaprotoi* of the Heptanomia and Arsinoite nome, greeting. The season for the building up of the dykes and the cleansing of the canals having arrived, I thought it necessary to announce to you by this letter that all the cultivators and ... ought now to build these up with all the zeal on the ... belonging to them, with a view to the public gain of all and to their own private advantage ... Therefore, let it be the care of you, the *strategoi* and *dekaprotoi*, to urge all to devote themselves to this most necessary labor, and to see that the overseers usually elected for the purpose are chosen from magistrates or private persons who will compel every one to perform his proper work by personal service ... so that the dykes may be raised to the ordained height and breadth and the breaches be filled up, in order that they be able to withstand the flood of the most sacred Nile auspiciously approaching; and that the canals be cleansed up to the so-called standards and the usual width in order that they may easily contain the coming influx of water for the irrigation of the fields, this being for the common weal; and that absolutely no money is exacted from any one in place of work. If any one dare to attempt exactions or to neglect these orders, let him know that not only his property but his life will be at stake for injuring measures designed for the safety of the whole of Egypt. (P.Oxy. XII 1409, AD 278, translation Grenfell and Hunt)

This is reminiscent in some ways of the late third-century BC Ptolemaic “*oikonomos*” handbook,” mentioned earlier. Parallels can also be drawn to early fourth-century Panopolis, where a public notice asks private individuals to offer advice on irrigation to authorities in the interests of all (P.Panop.Beatty. 2.222–228, with Adams 2007, pp. 97–98). Do these texts offer a genuine vision of local government in Greco-Roman Egypt? Greeks and Romans might think so; Egyptians would perhaps have a more circum-spect view. Modern scholars sympathetic to Roman government might agree with the former, but there is too much evidence of dissatisfaction and passive resistance to ignore. That said, it was in everyone’s best interest that land was productive: taxes could be paid, the state satisfied, and families could eat – both in cities relying on their hinterland and in

the villages and rural areas themselves. There is good reason to suspect that the overbearing nature of our evidence to some degree disguises the agency of provincial people at local levels. Oversight at the local level is evident in this second-century AD example:

To Apollonios, *strategos* of the Apollonopolites Heptakomia, from Pcheris, son of Pouoris, and Orsenouphis, son of Peteminis, *overseers of irrigation for the village of Nabö*. We swear by the fortune of the Emperor Caesar Traianus Hadrianus Optimus Augustus Germanicus Dacicus Parthicus that we will make the lands of those named below ready for irrigation within three days. Otherwise we may be liable to our oath. (List of names follows.) (P.Flor. I 326, translation Adams)

But problems certainly existed with irrigation systems, as is well documented in both the Ptolemaic and the Roman Periods. In a petition to the village scribe Menches in late second-century BC Kerkeosiris, one Pasis states that his water supply has been blocked, and his crops lost:

It is an old-established custom to water the royal land belonging to me in the neighborhood of the said village by means of the royal conduit which passes through the adjacent crown and temple land of Lykos son of Zopyrion, and others. Now in the 2nd year during my absence from home on pressing matters for Asklepiades (the king's) cousin, the aforesaid Lykos thinking that he had a favorable opportunity dammed up that part of the above-mentioned conduit which lay on his own land. The result of this was that I missed the right season for the irrigation of the land, and incurred a loss amounting to 30 artabas of wheat besides 3 talents of bronze for the expenses of other irrigation works. I therefore at the time took you and Horos the komarch and the elders of the cultivators and pointed out the damage and the dammed-up conduit, and you decided that the aforesaid Lykos should dig out his part and that I should use it for irrigation according to custom, as is my right. Up to the present time, however, he has not done so, but procrastinates, causing me every year to miss the proper season for irrigating and watering the crops, and involving me in the aforesaid loss in wheat and money, the total of which is from the 2nd to the 6th year 150 artabas of wheat and 15 talents of bronze. (P.Tebt. I 50, translation Grenfell and Hunt)

So, individuals were often at the mercy of – and might suffer from – the actions of their counterparts, and had little redress through the state.

An interesting event had taken place a few years earlier in Kerkeosiris, which shows what might galvanize the state into action. For reasons that are unclear, crown tenant farmers had defected (*anachoresis*) to the temple at Narmouthis in November 114 BC, thus threatening the sowing season. They had essentially gone on strike, having sown less than 10% of their land. The situation had improved little after a month or so, when a report shows that only about 28% of the land was sown. In the absence of definitive evidence, it seems safe to suppose that this situation was abnormal. How matters were resolved is not certain, but it is clear that the land was sown by February 113 BC, and that the tenant farmers were able to pay their dues later in that year (Verhoogt 1998, pp. 167–175). Such were the weapons of the weak against the state.

In the Roman Period, things were often no better, although we should certainly be wary of assuming that they were universally bad. The reign of Nero, for example, has been

seen as a period of particular crisis, but earlier evidence (most notably the so-called archive of Nemesion of Philadelphiea, TM arch 149) points to chronic problems rather than times of particular crisis. Problems of irrigation were often at the heart of matters. Augustus, we know, instituted a systematic improvement of irrigation (Suetonius, *Augustus* 18; also Strabo 17.1.13 on the Romans “setting things right”; cf. *Historia Augusta*, *Probus* 9.3–4 for third-century similarities, possibly echoing Suetonius). We know that in the time of Trajan, the dikes and irrigation channels were in a state of disrepair. This might have been due to limitations in the *penthemeros* system, perhaps including a failure to “encourage” enough inhabitants to undertake work. This in turn may be linked to substantial changes to systems of taxation in the reign of Trajan, including the introduction of the *chomatikon* to raise money for the repair of irrigation works, along with a rigorous improvement to the *penthemeros* system (Sijpesteijn 1964, p. 1). The liturgical system extended beyond mere labor to include oversight of work (e.g. P.Giss. I 58 for a *chomat(o)epimeletes*). By the third century, river workers were employed to clear canals at a set rate per cubic unit (*naubion*) (e.g. P.Oxy. XII 1427).

Moving into Late Antique Egypt, an important collection of letters from the Panopolite nome, dating to the reign of Diocletian, reveals that the concerns of the state with regard to irrigation, agricultural production, and taxation were broadly similar to those in earlier periods. A lack of real direction on the part of the state and a continued reliance on coordination and cooperation among locals are clear. The friction between both is still present (Adams 2003). As Ptolemy I and Ptolemy II Philadelphus, Augustus, the Flavians, Trajan, Hadrian, and a number of third-century emperors (most notably Pertinax and Probus; cf. P.Oxy. XII 1409 quoted earlier) had done, the emperor Diocletian attempted to reinvigorate the Egyptian agricultural economy; all were important periods of change and transition from economic distress (Adams 2004). A small concentration of documents from the Fayum dating to the final years of the third century indicates that there was a concerted effort to increase the amount of public and private land under cultivation. It can be no coincidence that this coincided with the census undertaken in AD 297 and the new tax regime introduced in the preceding year (Adams 2004, pp. 87–89, 95–99).

Land use and productivity in Greco-Roman Egypt were determined by irrigation. In the Ptolemaic Period, private ownership of land has been underestimated (especially in the Thebaid) – payments of rent or taxes do not denote lack of ownership. It certainly increased over time. The holding of land was linked to state service, especially military service. This in and of itself was a stimulus to agricultural production, as it called for reclamation in the Fayum, but it also provided the military backbone of the Ptolemaic state. The soldiers settled on such land became cleruchs (after *kleros*, the name of the plot of land) of different categories; in return for hereditary land, they helped guarantee local security. Such land came to represent the largest portion of private land in the Roman Period. The majority of the population, the Egyptian *fellahin*, was usually bound to annually leased plots of crown land (*basilike ge*). Over time, the annual nature of land leases became for all intents and purposes an alienable arrangement. Temple land represented the final main category. Careful survey and registration of this land, along with details of the crops sown and livestock reared, formed the basis of systems of taxation and thus state revenue. We have seen with the organization of irrigation that central government was

limited in its direct control, but in the Ptolemaic and later periods, the central gathering of information was key to state interests. While the Ptolemaic state, in its approach to agricultural production, may not have been fully similar to the Romans, it still sought to maximize profit and minimize risk. The presence of royal and priestly elites, as well as immigrant soldiers, certainly increased production, and new crops and significant investment in irrigation increased safety margins.

It is arguable that the redistributive nature of the Ptolemaic economy hindered the development of agricultural production. Not so during the Roman Period. The main differences were institutional rather than cultural. Patterns of land-holding, taxation regimes, and population growth were central. In the Ptolemaic Period, the royal and priestly elites were dominant, and large privately owned land was what provided their revenue, due to the fiscal privileges they enjoyed. The wealth generated was redistributed among this elite. One important point is that such positions and roles were voluntary, but lucrative. This was “rent-seeking” behavior (Monson 2012b, p. 210), and importantly this is to some extent preclusive to profit-seeking behavior, which is what stimulates investment and growth.

The level of change imposed by the Romans after the annexation of the Ptolemaic kingdom remains a controversial area (Lewis 1970, 1984; Bowman and Rathbone 1992; Monson 2012b). It is clear that there were continuities. It is equally certain that a number of important innovations had a radical effect on agriculture and economy in the new province. The most important fiscal and institutional developments were the imposition of a fixed rate of tax on privately owned land (very different from the Ptolemaic variable-rate taxes) and the development of a metropolitan elite and gradual implementation of a system of liturgical offices, both of which served to disrupt and change the social and administrative hierarchies of the Ptolemies (this, too, is a matter of debate: see Bowman and Rathbone 1992; on elites, see Hagedorn 2007; Jördens 2009, pp. 267–271). A low fixed rate of taxation led to an increased investment in agriculture, with more derelict land being brought into production. Land sold owned by the state, often classed as *hypologos* (denoting that it produced little or no income), was sold off in order to encourage private persons to invest in it and bring it into cultivation. It was sold cheaply, either at a fixed price or by auction, and was tax-free (*ateleia*) for three years (Rowlandson 1996, pp. 48–53). Landownership, then, became the primary source of wealth accumulation, and this was integral to the new liturgical system, which was based on property ownership, with the more important liturgies reserved for those with the most property. The new regime of taxation, and its foundation at a fixed rate, may in some ways have led to a slightly less intrusive system of administration, in that annual surveys of land were no longer so vital. Average landowners, however, may not have noticed.

These developments led to the advent of the large estates known in the third century (e.g. those of Appianus and Valerius Titianianus; Rathbone 1991; Kehoe 1991; on Valerius Titianianus, see P. Mich. XI 620) and the Later Roman Period (those of the Apiones; Hickey 2007, 2012; see Chapter 16). In the Late Antique Period, it was changes in fiscal regimes that allowed for the development of agriculture – the monetization of tax collection led to investment and stimulated productivity in vineyards and orchards (Hickey 2014). In all of this, irrigation was a constant.

15.2 Stone and Quarrying

Water may have been Egypt's most important natural resource – alongside the resulting high levels of agricultural productivity – but it was by no means the only one. Egypt was also rich in minerals, metals, and stone. Egyptian grain certainly represented an important aspect of supply to the city of Rome and other metropolitan centers; it likewise contributed greatly to the supply of pedigree building stone and marble, important both physically and symbolically. The annexation of Egypt had a profound effect on trade in marble and building stone in the Roman Empire, not only offering access to the granites and porphyries of Aswan and the Eastern Desert, but also introducing the Romans to monolithic architecture on a scale they had not seen before (Ward-Perkins 1992, p. 21). The development of quarrying in Egypt from the Pharaonic into the Roman Period is clear in patterns of use and extraction; the sandstone and limestone quarries central to pharaonic and Ptolemaic building continued to be used, while the granites of Aswan and the newly exploited granites and porphyry of the Eastern Desert saw intensive prospecting and quarrying.

Suetonius, in a well-known passage, informs us that quarries and mines came under the control of the imperial *patrimonium* in the principate of Tiberius (Suetonius, *Tiberius* 49.2). The passage is often misunderstood, and it is now clear that no such monopoly on resources existed and that quarries were in the main run at a local level (Russell 2013, p. 53). The quarries of Egypt, however, were different. The granodiorite stone of the Eastern Desert and Aswan was almost exclusively used for imperial building projects in Rome and the provinces, with only a very small amount trickling into the private market, perhaps in the form of off-cuts or thin veneers (Hirt 2015). Limestone quarries in Egypt seem largely to have been run at a local level, and provided building stone for the *metropoleis* and villages (see Figure 15.2).

There were two main stimuli driving the quarrying of stone: imperial building projects and increasing levels of urbanization – the *metropoleis* of Roman Egypt, with their Greco-Roman buildings, were a new feature of the province (Łukaszewicz 1986; Bowman 1992).

As noted, Egyptian granites and porphyry from the Eastern Desert and Aswan were important to imperial building projects in Rome and, to a more limited extent, the provinces (Figure 15.3 for Alexandria). Given the distant nature of the quarries in the desert (the most important being Mons Claudianus and Mons Porphyrites) and Aswan (far to the south), the difficulties of extraction, and the logistics of transport, their exploitation was in many ways anomalous among quarrying activity in Egypt (Russell 2013, pp. 80–81; Hirt 2015).

The Eastern Desert had been the focus of limited pharaonic and Ptolemaic interest. It was traversed by a network of transport routes, which developed over time (some favored over others on different occasions – see, initially, Sidebotham et al. 2008). In the Roman Period, the most important routes traversed the desert from Koptos to Myos Hormos (see Figure 15.4) and Berenike on the Red Sea coast (Cuvigny 2003; Sidebotham 2012); during the reign of Hadrian, a new road, the Via Hadriana, was constructed from Antinoopolis to Berenike. Linked routes traveled north to the quarry sites at Mons Porphyrites and Claudianus (Adams 2001, 2007; Sidebotham 2008). Imperial interest in the Eastern Desert grew over time. Prospecting clearly occurred. It is perhaps no accident



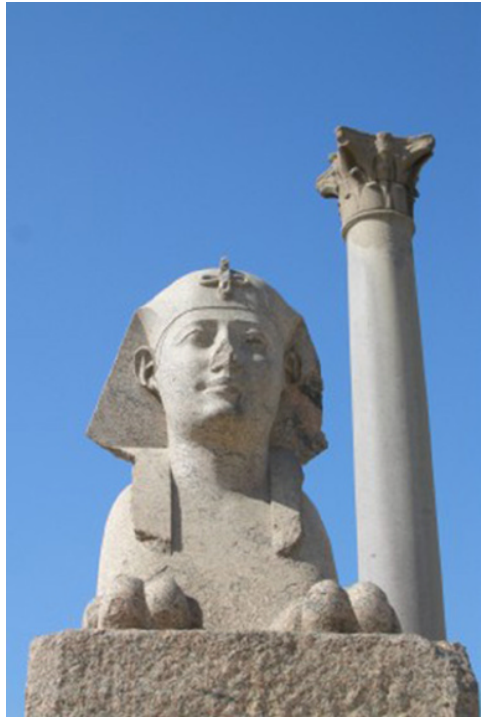


Figure 15.3 “Diocletian’s Pillar” (Aswan granite) and sphinx. Serapeum, Alexandria, reign of Diocletian. Source: Image courtesy Colin Adams.



Figure 15.4 Excavations at Myos Hormos, looking east toward the Red Sea. Source: Image courtesy Colin Adams.

(given Suetonius' statement) that it was in the reign of Tiberius that the site that would become Mons Porphyrites was discovered:

Gaius Cominus Leugas, who discovered the quarries of the porphyry stone and knekites and black porphyry and also (found) multi-colored stones, dedicated a sanctuary to Pan and Sarapis the very great gods for the well being of his children. The 4th year of Tiberius Caesar Augustus, Epeiph 29th. (translation van Rengen 1995)

The quarries of Mons Claudianus were opened up, likely in the reign of Claudius, and were worked until the second quarter of the third century. It is clear that the quarries here and at Porphyrites, as well as their satellites, and perhaps others such as Mons Ophiates, were run along similar lines; they were probably administratively linked. New quarries at Aswan were developed between AD 201 and 203, as shown by an inscription from the temple of Philae stating that "imperial works" (*opera dominica*) were opened on the orders of the prefect of Egypt, Subatianus Aquila (CIL III 75 = ILS 4424).

Quarry operations were directed by the *Praefectus Mons Berenicidis*, under the scrutiny of the *Praefectus Aegypti*; the involvement of governors was necessary not only for the utilization of state resources and human labor within the province, but also for negotiations with the emperor and other provincial governors, who may at various times have provided experts (Hirt 2015, p. 301). The earliest evidence we have from the Eastern Desert dates to AD 11. An inscription from Wadi Semna preserves a dedication, set up by his freedman, of P. Iuventius Rufus, "tribune of the III Legion (Cyrenaica), prefect of Berenike, in charge of the mines of emerald, topaz, pearls, and of all the quarries of Egypt" (I.Pan. 51 = SEG XX 670). Another inscription of Rufus shows him operating in Wadi Hammamat (I.Koptos à Kosseir 41 = IGRR 1236; see also IGRR 1235 for his freedman Agathopous, a *procurator*). With the discovery of Mons Porphyrites, we must be looking at a concerted effort on the part of the state to utilize the resources of the region. The evidence also points to imperial coordination: the use of soldiers and procurators – later of the *familia Caesaris* – was done with imperial authority. Indeed, the exploitation of these quarries and the logistics of moving stone from the desert to Rome (or the provinces) could only have been achieved through the mobilization of imperial resources and the state's exploitation of local administration (Adams 2001; Hirt 2015). It was as much a financial and logistical triumph as a technical one, and is a good example of how the state could tap many different levels of resource in a province; the expense was beyond all save the emperors (Adams 2001, p. 172).

Archeological evidence from the Eastern Desert casts a good deal of light on these operations. Additionally, it is one of the comparatively few examples of a real opportunity to bring archeological and documentary evidence together. Mons Claudianus has produced thousands of ostraca (see Chapter 17), and other sites in the Eastern Desert are yielding similar (if not so rich) finds. Along with tantalizing snapshots from papyri from elsewhere in Egypt, a picture of the operations can be revealed. The remains of the military and civilian installations at Mons Claudianus are impressive in themselves. That a life of comparative luxury could be enjoyed by their inhabitants – judging by the evidence of floral and faunal remains, as well as many private letters and supply documents preserved in the written record – is even more surprising (van der Veen 1998).

A papyrus from the reign of Hadrian, belonging to the archive of a *strategos* called Apollonios, neatly illustrates many aspects of the logistics involved in tapping the resources of the desert:

to the most honored Apollonius, greetings. Chaeremon the bearer of this letter is not unknown to you, my brother, for I left him with you last year to collect the clothing from you, and now I have sent him to collect the barley. I call upon you to accommodate him in all ways and to hand over all the barley in your nome, giving him all assistance so that he can load the barley quickly and bring it to [the Nile port] Kaine. For we have a large number of animals for the purposes of carrying down a 50 feet column and we are almost out of barley. You will be of very great service to me, my brother, if the barley is given over quickly. (P. Giss. I 69, translation Adams; with Peña 1989; Adams 2001, 2007)

Apart from the obvious technical and logistical matters touched upon here, what is most clear is the reach of the state. Many animals (camels, judging by surviving requisition orders: e.g. BGU III 762; Adams 2007, p. 202) were requisitioned from communities in the Nile Valley and the Fayum, not only to assist with the transport of the column, but also to carry food supplies to the quarries of Mons Claudianus (Adams 2007, pp. 196–210). A regular caravan service (the *poreia*) brought supplies under normal circumstances, but no doubt this had to be augmented to cater for special circumstances such as this operation. The requisition of barley and other foodstuffs from the Fayum and Oxyrhynchos is attested in other documents (SB XIV 12169; P.Oxy. XLVI 3243).

Another good example of the logistics involved can be found in letters preserved in a papyrus relating to the city of Panopolis, dating to AD 300 (P.Panop.Beatty 2.43–50; Adams 2001, p. 186):

Let every one of you, therefore, considering the absolute necessity of this task, display his own zeal, and while the ships are going up river, whenever they are not propelled by the winds, give his personal attention to seeing that they are towed by their crews [?] and the inhabitants of the villages of the river ports, and hand them over to the next *strategos*. And let each of you give receipts whenever the ships reach the boundaries of his nome, and take the same when he hands them over. (ll. 47–49, translation Skeat)

The ships had been sent from Alexandria to collect columns from Aswan; it seems that there was concern that they would not arrive in time to benefit from the increased speed of the downstream flow provided by the annual inundation. They were also operating to deadlines imposed by the seasonality of sailing in the Mediterranean. The letter shows the deep reach of the imperial administration, and how it could be put to use for an imperial building project. The burden, of course, largely fell on the province.

Imperial building within Egypt can be seen at the temple of Philae; as we have already noted, new quarries were opened there, perhaps supplemented by stone sourced at the quarries of Qertassi. Monolithic columns of granite from Aswan can be found in the Serapeum at Alexandria, including “Diocletian’s Pillar” (usually, but inaccurately, called “Pompey’s Pillar”; see Figure 15.3). Outside Egypt, granite columns from Aswan can be found at sites in Rome, most notably the Pantheon, as well as in Palestine and Syria – in impressive numbers, in the latter case (Russell 2013, pp. 152–154; Hirt 2015). It is likely

that these were imperial gifts, such as those of Antoninus Pius to the city of Antioch, where the paving of the city was provided from the Thebaid (John Malalas, *Chronicle* 11.24). But it was not only for imperial projects that stone was used, for we find it also in a private context – although this was no doubt the result of imperial gifts, or of trickle-down from imperial projects. We know, for example, of porphyry pillars belonging to M. Valerius Homullus (consul AD 152) that were used in buildings at Hermopolis in Egypt (Historia Augusta, *Antoninus Pius* 11.7; C.P.Herm. 86).

Demand for other stone in Egypt was encouraged by the growth of Greco-Roman architecture in Alexandria and the *metropoleis* (Łukaszewicz 1986; McKenzie 2007). It is clear that most building stone was sourced locally from the many limestone quarries found in the Nile Valley and its immediate environs (Klemm and Klemm 2008). The proximity of these quarries to the cities they supplied with stone makes sense given the difficulties and cost of transport (Russell 2013, pp. 65, 68). A good example is the quarrying associated with the construction of Hadrian's new city at Antinoopolis and the nearby quarries of Sheikh Ibada (Klemm and Klemm 2008, pp. 83–85). Other evidence includes the restoration of baths at Hermopolis in AD 107, ordered by the prefect Vibius Maximus, and the construction of new baths in Oxyrhynchos. The well-known third-century building accounts of Hermopolis (although perhaps concerning repairs after insurrection) are further testament to the ongoing nature of building work (P.Amh. II 64; P.Oxy. XLIII 3088; see Drew-Bear 1984 on the Hermopolite accounts). In Herakleopolis, a local magistrate ordered and paid for the transport of columns and capitals for a *palaestra* in the city (P.Hib. II 217, AD 177–180). A similar arrangement seems to have been the case in an earlier text from the Oxyrhynchite nome dating to AD 117, where 100 stone capitals are ordered for the temple of Artemis (SB XIV 11958; on building, see Łukaszewicz 1986, pp. 139–157).

15.3 Conclusion

This chapter has largely been concerned with the exploitation and management of some of the principal natural resources of Egypt and the bending of the will of a ruling power to the inhabitants of kingdom and province. Egypt was run at a profit. On one level, it could be argued that everyone benefitted: urbanization and economic growth can certainly be linked to the matters discussed. However, there were also chronic economic and social problems, caused by both natural forces and the oppression of the state. The spirit of collective responsibility and resulting gain for all is an illusion. Kings and emperors exploited their subjects; for the rural inhabitants of Egypt, life was difficult, their existence dominated by the pattern of the agricultural year – which in turn was dictated by the interaction between river and desert.

FURTHER READING

On irrigation in Egypt, Butzer (1976) is central. He offers a more balanced view than the traditional ones of Rostovtzeff (1926) (second edition 1966) and Préaux (1939). For irrigation in the Ptolemaic and Roman Periods, the major work is Bonneau (1993), but also

important are Crawford (1971), Thompson (1999), Manning (2003a), and Römer (2017) for the Ptolemaic Period, and Bonneau (1971) and Monson (2012) for the Roman.

On quarrying in Egypt, the basic text remains Klemm and Klemm (2008). A good discussion of quarrying in the Eastern Desert by Maxfield (2001) sets the scene, but we still await a scholarly overview of the quarry sites throughout the Roman Period. Hirt (2007) offers an excellent work on the administration of quarries; see Adams (2001, 2007) for transport and logistics. Russell (2013) provides a good discussion of the trade in stone. Sidebotham (2008) offers a good overview of the Eastern Desert.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

Economic Growth and the Exploitation of Land

Peter van Minnen

16.1 The Economy of Greco-Roman Egypt and Its Fundamentals

The title of this chapter indicates the limits of the evidence. Only for the exploitation of land do we know enough to reconstruct the trajectory from the Ptolemaic to the Late Roman Period. Economic growth comes in many forms, and may affect one sector more than others. We do not know enough to reconstruct the trajectories of any sector other than agriculture. There is an obvious plus to this: agriculture was the most important sector of the economy in Greco-Roman Egypt, as in any preindustrial economy. While we can be comfortable in the knowledge that we have something important to cover in this chapter, the problems are by no means insignificant. What if the role of agriculture, while always dominant, was not equally dominant over time?

A review of past and current wisdom on the topic of economic growth yields additional worries. Traditionally, a rather bleak picture has been painted of the Egyptian economy in the Ptolemaic and Early and Late Roman Periods. In the Ptolemaic Period, Egypt was exploited by the Ptolemaic state (i) to maintain itself, (ii) to finance its imperial project, and (iii) to support a growing population of Greeks and other favorites on whom the state depended for its survival. A luxurious court, an expensive empire, and a growing number of idle mouths (soldiers, priests) may well have creamed off whatever surplus was generated by Egypt's agriculture, thus canceling out economic growth. Things changed under the Romans, but did not get any better: Egypt was exploited by the Roman state (i) to maintain itself, (ii) to finance its imperial project, and (iii) to support a growing population of Romans and other favorites on whom the state depended for its survival. The court in Alexandria was less luxurious than before, and

even the imperial project tended to become less expansive over time, but the number of idle mouths continued to grow and, what was worse, the majority no longer resided in Egypt itself, where they would have stimulated the economy, but in Rome (the *plebs frumentaria*) and on the northern and eastern frontiers (the soldiers), thus canceling out economic growth in Egypt. With the establishment of the tetrarchic system in Late Antiquity, things changed again, but only for the worse: Egypt was exploited by the state (i) to maintain itself, (ii) to finance its imperial project, and (iii) to support a growing population of barbarians and other favorites on whom the state depended for its survival. The imperial project became more expensive, because the empire had to defend itself on its northern frontier against a growing number of barbarians, some of whom were pacified with bribes (settlement within the empire) and turned into idle mouths (soldiers), but not in Egypt itself, thus canceling out economic growth there.

This is, of course, a caricature. Things get more complicated when the demography, the tax burden, the agricultural regime, and landownership are taken into account.

16.1.1 *Demography*

Demography first: population growth, the urbanization level, and the percentage of the population engaged in agriculture all make a difference to economic growth. Population growth may cancel out any economic growth or – in an odd twist – may stimulate it. The demographic regime (high fertility/high mortality) allowed only slow population growth (Bagnall and Frier 2006, based on census records from the Early Roman Period) and did not stimulate economic growth, but the influx of Greeks in the Early Ptolemaic Period (Clarysse and Thompson 2006) may well have done so, at least initially (we do not have demographic data for Late Antiquity). The growth of cities may hamper economic growth, because the cities extract more surplus from the land, or, in an odd twist, may stimulate it, by creating a larger market for agricultural goods. By making the cities responsible for the administration of the countryside (Bowman and Rathbone 1992), the Romans stimulated the development of a more Greco-Roman type of city in Egypt, and this resulted among other things in a public building boom in the second century (Bowman 1992), which may well have stimulated – or can at least be taken as an index of – economic growth. If more and more people are engaged in other activities than agriculture, the economy in a preindustrial economy may depend more and more on a stagnant number of peasants – or, in an odd twist, it may become more rational, and thus grow. As one can see, things can – and sometimes did – go either way. The odd twists have happened and continue to happen in modern times, first in Western Europe, then elsewhere. To explain these twists, scholars have come up with various theories, which are then often used to formulate policies in countries where they have not yet happened. One can invert this and predict what may have happened in the past, and that is how some of these modern theories have been invoked to argue for growth in ancient economies in the absence of firm evidence. Others resist it and draw a straight line: ancient populations grew, canceling out economic growth; cities grew at the expense of the countryside, on which the economy depended; and over time, more idle mouths were added to the burden of the peasants.

16.1.2 *The Tax Burden*

The tax burden is another complicating factor. Does the economy grow when it is taxed more aggressively? That is what everybody was inclined to believe until a generation ago (Hopkins 1980). Or does the economy grow when it is taxed less aggressively? That is what everybody has been led to believe since then. It seems more promising to ask less politically charged questions. Where does the burden of taxation lie? On the land or on the people, on the peasants or on the landowners? A case can be made that, over time, the tax burden in Greco-Roman Egypt shifted, first from the land to the people (from the Ptolemies to the Romans), and then from the people to the land (from early Roman Egypt to Late Antiquity; see van Minnen 2006, restated in van Minnen 2008, pp. 231–234). Initially, the Ptolemaic state, as the biggest landowner, profited most from the agricultural surplus, through high rents on royal land and high taxes on private land; it may or may not have used some of its income to stimulate economic growth in Egypt. After the first shift, tax rates on land were at their lowest, and the Egyptian population was oppressed by various capitation taxes, which did not bode well for a growing economy. The Roman state moreover transferred most of its tax income to Italy and the provinces, with the largest concentration of soldiers there. On the other hand, the low tax regime on land allowed for the concentration of landed wealth in fewer hands, which again may or may not have stimulated economic growth in Egypt. After the second shift, capitation taxes disappeared, and the tax burden fell on those who could bear it more easily, the landowners; this may or may not have led to economic growth in Egypt. In the absence of firm evidence, any view of the effect of taxation on economic growth is bound to be impressionistic. It is impossible to give precise figures for how much of the tax income was spent in cities, the regional/provincial capital, and abroad.

16.1.3 *The Agricultural Regime*

The agricultural regime is another complicating factor. Were the same crops grown over time? Who decided what was grown? It is easy to argue that the most important crop in Greco-Roman Egypt was wheat, but was it always so dominant? Its overriding importance throughout the Greco-Roman Period depended on two factors: subsistence agriculture, or the part of the agricultural yield consumed by the peasants themselves, predominantly wheat, and taxation in kind, again predominantly in the form of wheat. The Ptolemies sold tax wheat abroad, and the Romans took it to Rome, and later Constantinople. Surplus wheat (after subsistence and taxation) went to feed the populations in Egyptian cities, including Alexandria, but the market in wheat is not well known, unlike the market in wine (for the latter, see e.g. van Minnen 1998a). And what role did other crops play: were they a mere necessity (for crop rotation), or were they grown for urban markets or even markets further away? Such crops may have been the engines of economic growth, especially if the tax regime left them relatively alone. Papyrus was grown in the Delta, and not for crop rotation. The whole Mediterranean world depended on Egyptian papyrus for its administration. The increase in paperwork in the Hellenistic Period, sustained in the Roman Period, must have been important – at first mainly to the Ptolemaic state, which imposed a monopoly on Egyptian papyrus as on so much else, but later also to the wider

economy, although not enough is known about this (Lewis 1974; see also Chapter 10). Subsistence and market economies coexist, even if just because peasants have to pay some taxes in money; there is also abundant evidence that tenants often had to pay rent in money (van Minnen 2008, p. 230).

16.1.4 *Landownership*

Landownership is the final complicating factor. Who owned the land in Greco-Roman Egypt? The state, institutional owners, absentee landowners (in the cities, in the regional/provincial capital, abroad), or the peasants themselves? The answer is all four, but in ratios that changed over time. The state, institutional owners, and absentee landowners come with distinct types of tenants, who also fare differently over time. Absentee landowners can also exploit land directly, with the help of a permanent or temporary labor force, but this too changes over time.

16.2 The Economy of Greco-Roman Egypt Limited by Time, Place, and Type of Activity

No one has ever formulated answers to all of the questions about demography, tax burden, agricultural regime, and landownership in Greco-Roman Egypt that I have just mentioned. Instead, scholars have limited themselves in time or space or to certain economic activities, agents, or institutions. Usually, such limitations have led to an overestimation of the importance – more often positive than negative – of the chosen subject to the overall economy of Greco-Roman Egypt.

16.2.1 *Chronological and Geographical Limitations*

Thus, scholars working on the third century BC have always been quite optimistic about the state of the economy, even if for different reasons, and this is now also the case for scholars working on the first two centuries of Roman rule (in the past, famously summed up by Milne 1927 as “the ruin of Egypt through Roman mismanagement”). Scholars working on the third century of Roman rule are less optimistic, because the traditional view has not yet given way to a more positive one (e.g. the “construction fever” in Egyptian cities in the third century is a mirage: van Minnen 2002a, *contra* Carrié and Rousselle 1999, p. 706), and has more recently received support from the renewed interest in the effects of the Antonine plague. But, there are few dissenters to the now common view of the sixth century (famously put down by Gelzer 1913 as “administrative misery”) as a period of economic growth.

Apart from these chronological limitations, scholars have also tried geographical ones. The Fayum (the Arsinoite nome) usually fares better than other districts, at least from the third century BC until the third century AD, when decline sets in at the edges (van Minnen 1995), but there are champions for Middle Egypt (the Oxyrhynchite and Hermopolite nomes) in the first centuries of Roman rule, not to mention the Delta in the

second century and the western oases in the fourth, usually because we happen to have a concentration of evidence for that place and period. The Oxyrhynchite nome in the sixth century is now receiving closer scrutiny, and it is no longer all misery (for most) or all prosperity (for some). Further geographical limitations have been attempted, which have usually led to an overly optimistic view of the local economy of one or other Egyptian city or village. Alexandria remains the most understudied of all cities in Egypt relative to its size and importance. Its role in the economy of Greco-Roman Egypt, if not the whole Mediterranean, would seem crucial (cf. Fraser 1972 for the Ptolemaic Period).

16.2.2 Limitations by Type of Activity

Apart from these chronological and geographical limitations, scholars have tried to limit themselves to certain economic activities. By far the most studied agricultural activity is viticulture (Ruffing 1999; cf. Sandy 1989 on vegetable oils), and scholarly optimism about its impact on the economy has been intoxicating. The most intensely studied non-agricultural activity is textile production (Dross-Krüpe 2011), and its role has also tended to be exaggerated. Among economic agents and institutions, one may single out big landowners and banks. Big landowners have traditionally been interpreted in negative terms, but in recent decades this has turned around one hundred and eighty degrees. The concentration of land in the hands of the rich has been interpreted as a more rational use of land, with better opportunities for investment and economies of scale. There will be ample opportunity to revisit this issue in what follows. Banks have been studied by one scholar in particular: Bogaert (1994a), who has consistently maintained a conservative estimation of their role in the economy, although the recent interest in institutions inspired by the New Institutional Economics makes this now seem too cautious. At any rate, the disappearance of banks in the third century AD is at once a symptom and an engine of economic decline. In early Roman Egypt, many private transactions were facilitated by a reliable network of banks. The rapid drop off in transactions after the onset of inflation in AD 275 led to their disappearance, further reducing the number of transactions. It took about a century to escape this vicious circle.

In what follows, I will try to avoid the pitfalls of limiting myself to one or other period, place, activity, or agent, and aim at a more comprehensive picture of the economy of Greco-Roman Egypt (cf. Rathbone 1989). We have to have some idea of its development over time. I will characterize the broad chronological divisions (Ptolemaic, Early Roman, and Late Antique) and draw on a variety of places, and relate the common, emerging, and problematic ideas about the demography, the tax system, the agricultural regime, and landownership to each as far as possible.

16.3 The Ptolemaic Period: Growth and Stagnation

The third century BC was definitely a time of demographic growth. Large numbers of Greeks settled in Egypt, and new areas were developed. One such area that is particularly well known is the Fayum. Demographic data from when it was just getting underway cannot be extrapolated to all of Egypt (cf. Clarysse and Thompson 2006). Except for the

two-thirds of the Delta closest to the Mediterranean, the rest of Egypt must have been a whole lot more densely occupied than the Fayum at every point in its history.

The tax system of early Ptolemaic Egypt also brought important changes. The Greeks introduced some institutions they had been familiar with at home, such as banks and tax farming (bidding for the right to collect money taxes). These are in tune with the rapid monetization characteristic of the Early Ptolemaic Period (von Reden 2007; see Chapter 14). The number of transactions and the amount of paperwork went up at short notice. There is some evidence from the early Ptolemaic Fayum that investments were made to increase productivity, but it is difficult to extrapolate this to the rest of the country. Tax farming is relatively well known thanks to the so-called Revenue Laws (Bingen 2007a, pp. 157–188), but it is now clear that the bulk of the taxes were collected in traditional Egyptian ways and that even tax farmers were dependent on existing state institutions (see Chapter 7).

New crops were introduced under the early Ptolemies, and scholars have traditionally ascribed great significance to the fact that Egyptians were beer drinkers while Greeks were wine drinkers. Again, evidence from the Fayum suggests that a sizeable portion of the new development was given over to vineyards, but it seems adventurous to extrapolate this to the rest of Egypt. It is more likely that less new land was given over to viticulture in the Nile Valley than in the Fayum, where there happened to be more new land. But the presence of the Greeks must have made some difference (cf. van Minnen 2001a). Wine had been produced in Egypt from pharaonic times, but the additional wine drinkers had to be satisfied by the growth of more vines, so as to avoid costly imports. This also led to a major item of agricultural produce being sold down the Nile to Alexandria, but not beyond. Egyptian wine, and especially vinegar, did eventually make it to Rome, but not in significant quantities (Marzano 2013, p. 95 reckons with only 2000 hectoliters of Egyptian wine in Rome, out of a total annual consumption of 1 672 000 hectoliters). Scholars who have been overly optimistic about wine production in any given period of Greco-Roman Egypt have a hard time explaining who drank all the surplus in their perhaps too generous calculations.

Finally, the landownership situation in the third century BC is not as clear as it used to be. Traditionally, the situation in the Fayum has been extrapolated to the rest of Egypt, but this now seems unwarranted. Because the Fayum was developed only in the third century BC, the state played a much more aggressive role in assigning new land to new owners, be they Greek settlers from the military (the so-called cleruchs) or Greek elites such as the *dioiketes* (“minister of finances”) Apollonios, whose estate in the north-eastern Fayum is best known thanks to the papers traditionally known as the Zenon archive (see Chapter 17). Apollonios was given 10 000 arouras (roughly 27.5 km²), which he obviously heavily invested in – but with quick returns, most of which were split between the estate and his needs in Alexandria. As with other such gifts to members of the elite, these were meant to last but in fact did not. The gift estates (*doreai*) were eventually confiscated by the Ptolemies – but not the many smaller grants to cleruchs, which developed into one of the more prominent types of private landownership in the Fayum – but not necessarily elsewhere. In other parts of the country, more traditional forms of private landownership persisted.

The big question, which seems answerable to some extent, is what role the state itself had as landowner. The land the state confiscated could have been used for more military

settlers, rented out as royal (public) land, sold, or left derelict. There was royal land everywhere, but how much exactly is as yet unknown. It does not seem likely that the Ptolemaic state could have accumulated such land indefinitely, because it had to respect existing landownership patterns in places it did not itself develop. For a while, the state had indeed to settle additional cleruchs, but given that the original pool of immigrants from the Greek world may not have reproduced itself adequately, the need for more land for more military settlers probably abated; this is also true because, after about a century of Greek rule, Egyptians were increasingly recruited into the army, and they were not always given land – and if they were, it was only plots of smaller size (see Chapter 11). On the other hand, the state had to keep the Egyptian priests happy with more grants to temples, especially as the power of the Ptolemaic dynasty weakened over time.

Exploiting public land is a nuisance, and economically less rational than other forms of exploitation. It is much easier to let public land become private land (even if the name is retained) and have the new owners worry about investments and raising productivity. That is what essentially happened in the second and first centuries BC and the first three centuries AD. By the fourth century AD, all public land was de facto in private hands. This has to be seen as the outcome of a long process, not a one-time decision of the late third century (as it has traditionally been made out to be) or of the Early Roman Period. In the third century BC, however, this process of de facto privatization was still in its infancy, and the role of the state as landowner in the Fayum and elsewhere was instrumental in creating a separate class of peasants, the royal farmers (*basilikoi georgoi*), who were given certain privileges.

The same gradual change can be posited for the monopolies and for tax farming. Over time, these institutions became less and less important, and they totally disappeared by the second century AD. A long-term perspective that stresses continuous change better reflects reality than one that pits “the” Ptolemaic Period versus “the” Roman Period, because the latter leads to the false idea of major policy changes in the reign of Augustus. Collective responsibility (admittedly, a favorite of the Romans) and “compulsory public services” (*leitourgiai*) were also not introduced in one go, to replace a system of tax farming; rather, all three coexisted and overlapped for quite a while.

Scholars do not agree about the state of the economy in the later Ptolemaic Period. For some, these were times of trouble – and this is certainly true in political terms. The best evidence comes from Kerkeosiris, where the papers of one Menches, a village scribe (*komo-grammateus*), include long tax lists (analyzed by Crawford 1971, supplemented by Verhoogt 1998). In 116/15 BC, the land under cultivation at Kerkeosiris is used for the following types of crops: wheat 55%, barley 3%, fodder (useful for crop rotation) 16%, vegetables (ditto) 22%, and pasturage 4%. In addition, there is a lot of land not under cultivation – only 53.65% is (Monson 2012b, p. 38; see also Monson 2013, p. 129, figure 3). This has to do with the fact that Kerkeosiris was on the outskirts of the Fayum, where there was a lot of marginal state-owned land. The state was having trouble finding reliable tenants: one-third of those at Kerkeosiris changed from year to year (see the introduction to P.Coll.Youtie I 15). A land survey of the Edfu nome of the same period (119/18 BC) complements the picture for the south of Egypt. There, even smaller portions of arable land seem to have been cultivated (P.Haun. IV 70). In the Ptolemaic Period, uncultivated land was not taxed, and this resulted in losses to the state. When more and more land

became private, especially in the Roman Period, land not under cultivation did come to be taxed, but at the low level for private land in general. The risk was thus passed on from the state to the private landowner, who stood to gain more when things were going well. When taxes on private land tripled in Late Antiquity, landownership became less profitable. Eventually, institutional owners such as churches refused to accept gifts of land because of the difficulties involved in making such land profitable. This contrasts markedly with the earlier Egyptian temples, which tried tenaciously to hold on to their land.

16.4 The Roman Period: Growth and Decline

The Early Roman Period witnessed a repeat of the Early Ptolemaic Period in some ways and a continuation of tendencies that appeared in the later Ptolemaic Period in other ways. There were also some innovations. One that may have had positive economic consequences is the institution of a landed property register, which has been adduced to explain the increased involvement of women in the credit market: it was safer for women to participate in that market if the most common type of security for loans, landed property, was tracked and to some extent protected by the Roman state (Lerouxel 2006, 2016). But this could be a product of the expansion of the economy, rather than one of the causes. The increase in the population demanded more protection for landowners, in order to prevent increased disputes over land (Monson 2012b, pp. 127–131). Another consequence of the institution of the landed property register was that land changed hands more often under open market conditions than it had in the Ptolemaic Period, when sales between members of the same family or caste (priests) were more common.

In what follows, I will first discuss some historical events in the Early Roman Period and their possible economic consequences. This will lead to a discussion of the balance between state-owned and private land, which continued to change in favor of the latter. A more developed discussion of the taxes on land anticipates developments in Late Antiquity. After discussing the various crops grown in Roman Egypt and the agricultural and other goods traded both there and abroad, I will end this section with a discussion of a particularly well-known village in the Roman Fayum, Theadelphia.

16.4.1 *Historical Events and Their Economic Consequences*

After the establishment of the Roman province of Egypt, the main historical incisions are: the economic crisis under Claudius, the increase in the amount of currency in circulation under Nero, and the Antonine plague under Marcus Aurelius. Political crises such as that in Alexandria under Caligula and that in Egypt as a whole during the Jewish Revolt under Trajan-Hadrian did not have noticeable effects on the economy (after the Jewish Revolt of AD 115–117, the property of Jews was confiscated, remaining on the books of the state throughout the second century).

The economic crisis under Claudius is best known from the *grapheion* archive from Tebtynis (cf. Toepel 1973). As Manca Masciadri and Montecchi (1982) have shown, many parents resorted to the transfer of their children to their creditors as the only means of security available to secure loans, with the idea that the transfer would be rendered null

and void upon the loans' repayment (in some cases, the loans may not have been repaid, and the children remained the slaves of the creditors). There are examples of such arrangements also for Alexandria in the reign of Augustus.

In the later years of his reign, Nero issued Egyptian coins with a lower silver content. He also issued a whole lot more coins than his predecessors. Yet, this had no noticeable inflationary effect on prices. The expansion of the Egyptian economy in the first century of Roman rule must have been sufficient to offset the inflationary effect the increase in the number of coins in circulation would otherwise have had.

On the other hand, after the Antonine plague (leading to an estimated population loss of 20% or more), prices in Egypt doubled, but there was no great increase in the coins in circulation until the middle of the third century. The decrease in the size of the population, coupled with the even bigger decrease in the number of economic transactions (fewer people produce less (note the drop calculated for one village in the Fayum by van Minnen 2001b), but they also do less with it), caused prices to rise in the face of a more or less stable coin supply.

Inflation did not set in until the middle of the third century, when the silver content of the coins was further reduced, because the increase in the number of coins in circulation (matching the increase in the number of emperors, each needing to pacify the troops and the population of Rome with lavish gifts) did not go hand in hand with an increase in the number of transactions and an expansion of the economy – on the contrary. Things got so bad that by AD 275, the bottom fell out of the currency. It is then that banks disappeared. The size of the Egyptian economy was starkly reduced for two generations; it took Constantine and his immediate successors almost half a century to stabilize the currency (from the 360s, inflation was negligible: prices not in gold *solidi* merely doubled in the two centuries after the 360s, whereas in the decades after 275 they had gone up a total of 50 000 times). Taxes in gold made their first appearance in the 370s.

16.4.2 *State-Owned and Private Land in the Roman Period*

The Jewish Revolt under Trajan-Hadrian is best known from the archive of Apollonios the *strategos* (see Box 20.1), but that archive is even more important for the data on land in the Apollonopolite nome (Heptakomia), where Apollonios was “chief executive officer.” In the village of Naboo (P.Giss. 60), state-owned land made up about a third of all land before a major reclassification of land in private hands under Hadrian (Rowlandson 2005, p. 177). The original figure has been taken as more reliable and generalizable than the bigger ones we find in some villages on the outskirts of the Fayum, where the state had created large amounts of land. The Naboo percentage has also been taken as typical for all of Middle and even Lower Egypt (see Blouin 2014 on the Mendesian nome, which by and large conforms to what we find in Middle Egypt; the Mendesian nome and Middle Egypt had “average” population density, contrasted with the Arsinoite and Herakleopolite nomes, which had low, and the Memphite and Letopolite nomes and Upper Egypt, which had high densities: Monson 2012b, p. 43). It must have been higher than what we find in Upper Egypt, where other, traditional forms of landownership had limited the extent of state-owned land (Manning 2003a). The Naboo percentage is also compatible with what we find in Middle Egypt (the Hermopolite and Oxyrhynchite nomes) in the fourth

century. The percentage of state land there (now fully privatized) was never more than 20% in the fourth century, but the decline from 33% may have had to do with the decline in the total amount of land under cultivation after the Antonine plague and the inflation after 275.

The amount of state-owned land continued to decline, and privately owned land (other than the imperial estates and land owned by temples) continued to increase, in the Roman Period. There had always been much state-owned land in Egypt, because the state had originally made agriculture possible by creating the infrastructure for it. The beginning of the Ptolemaic Period saw a modest repeat of this, especially in newly (re)developed areas such as the Fayum. There, we find the largest percentages of state-owned land, persisting in marginal areas such as at Karanis until the beginning of the fourth century AD (Rowlandson 2005, p. 178 versus 194). We also find “state farmers” (*demosioi georgoi*), who are often just that, and are always men. Elsewhere, tenants of the state also owned land privately, including women (Rowlandson 2005, p. 189). In return for its investment in the infrastructure (even if through forced labor), the state reasonably expected a modest rent from its tenants. Such tenants were doing rather well in the Ptolemaic Period, but they were much reduced in number and prosperity in the Roman one.

Peasants preferred private land of their own, if they could get it, and absentee landowners needed more land as their numbers grew. The state not only promoted private property directly (in the Ptolemaic Period, in the form of state land turned over to people like Apollonios the *dioiketes* or to cleruchs; in the Roman Period, to just about anybody willing to take it off the state’s hands), but also indirectly. Privately owned land was taxed at a lower rate than state-owned land was rented for. Even if short-term rents on private land were higher still, they were not *that* much higher in the Ptolemaic Period, and by the Roman Period things were apparently going so well that tenants were more likely to take on privately owned land, as after three centuries of natural selection state-owned land was mostly marginal. In the course of the Roman Period, such land continued to end up in private hands or, worse, to go out of commission altogether.

The so-called imperial estates of the Early Roman Period resembled the gift estates of the third century BC – they too did not survive for very long (Parássoglou 1978). The Egyptian temples continued as landowners in the Roman Period. The Romans were not particularly generous toward the temples, and in the course of the period euergetism in the *metropoleis* was diverted away from them to various aspects of Greco-Roman urbanization. As major institutional landowners in the villages, the Egyptian temples suffered most from the decline after the Antonine Plague and the inflation after 275. The recovery in Late Antiquity came too late for them. The fate of Egyptian priests followed a similar trajectory; individually, they profited from the economic growth in the Early Roman Period as much as anyone else.

16.4.3 *The Roman Tax Regime on Land*

The impression that taxes on land in Roman Egypt were low derives from the fact that most land in Roman Egypt was private, where there had been much less private land in the Ptolemaic Period, except in Upper Egypt. The Romans levied a modest tax on private land. Where possible, they continued to charge higher rents on state-owned land, but this

increasingly tended to disappear from the books or end up in the hands of those least unlikely to take it on: the peasants who worked it. For absentee landowners, privately owned land that was not taxed at the lower rate was far more desirable, since they had to pay the tax out of the rent they were getting from their tenants. In the Hermopolite *Landlisten* of the fourth century (P.Herm.Landl.), 8.25% of land owned by urban landowners in Hermopolis is (former) state land. At that time, up to 20% of all land was (former) state land; on the assumption that urban landowners accounted for only 30% of all land in the Hermopolite nome (Bagnall 1992), we can calculate that about 25% of the land owned by villagers was (former) state land: a proportion three times as big as that for urban landowners. In the course of the Roman Period, and probably even earlier, such villagers had always acquired more of the state land that became available for private ownership than urban landowners.

Taxes on land, including rents on state-owned land leased out to tenants of the state, declined gradually from the third century BC until the fourth century of Roman rule, by which time all state land was in private hands. There was no new Roman policy, implemented at the beginning of their rule, that turned large quantities of land from state- or temple-owned into private land. The average tax (including rent on state-owned land) declined from 1.75 to 1.25 artabas per aroura in the first three centuries of Roman rule (rents on private land also dropped somewhat after the Antonine plague). By the fourth, however, landowners paid 1.25 artabas per aroura plus 0.5 equiv. in money. This was raised to 1.25 artabas per aroura plus 1.5 equiv. in money in the sixth century of Roman rule, and in the reign of Justinian even further to 1.25 artabas per aroura plus 2.5 equiv. in money (see van Minnen 2006 for these figures). The amount paid in kind remained remarkably stable, because there was no reason to raise it (Rome received more than enough Egyptian wheat to feed itself, and Constantinople never was as big as Rome had been).

If we extrapolate the yield on private land grown with wheat from the rents charged on such land (c. 50% of the yield), we get the following percentages for the (value of the) taxes charged on such land over time: 8.33% in the first two centuries of Roman rule; 19.45% in the fourth; and 25–34.1% in the fifth and sixth (van Minnen 2008, pp. 231–232). This can be compared with the percentages the lessors got to keep: 45% in the first two centuries; 30.55% in the fourth; and 25–15.9% in the fifth and sixth. By the reign of Justinian, the income from land for those who did not work it themselves was reduced to a third of what it had been in the first two centuries (because the state had tripled the taxes on it); for those who did work their own land, the amount they got to keep was as follows: 91.67% in the first two centuries; 80.55% in the fourth; and 75.0–65.9% in the fifth and sixth. By the sixth century, they paid three times as much in taxes as the bigger landowners, although they retained almost three-quarters of what they got to keep in the first two centuries.

The difference between the Ptolemaic and Roman Periods lay in the peculiar way in which the tax on privately owned land and the rent on state-owned land were calculated. Under the Ptolemies, this was a flexible process, repeated each year before the harvest. Taxes and rents tended to come out at about the same rate (up to half the yield; Préaux 1939, pp. 131–133). Under the Romans, this was much less flexible. There were lower flat rates imposed every year, irrespective of the true state of the land. This incentivized the landowners to do well on all their land every year, whereas the Ptolemaic state made

it more profitable to leave some land uncultivated so as to get the most out of the land that was cultivated. Taxes on vineyards and orchards (always private) stabilized at 2 and 1 artaba equiv. in cash, respectively (compare Monson 2012b, p. 190) – not much different from the 1 artaba on private arable land.

The low land-tax regime favored the (further) development of private land. But private land did not mean large estates only. Smaller landowners predominated in the first two centuries of Roman rule, and the *Landlisten* list many in the fourth. P.Stras. X now reveals that some taxes on private land in the Hermopolite nome in the Early Roman Period were regressive, but significantly, those owning below a certain threshold were not charged such taxes at all. Instead of a deliberate policy favoring the rich and the “poor” (small landowners) at the same time, this is more likely the natural outcome of long negotiations (starting in the Ptolemaic Period) on the part of small landowners.

The evolution from state to private land and from high rents on state land to flat taxes on private land was a natural one, with big possibilities for the future: the state could raise taxes more easily than rents, as indeed happened in Late Antiquity.

In marked contrast to taxes on land, taxes in money increased under the Romans. Capitation and a host of other taxes are on record (see Wallace 1938a). The increase in prices after the Antonine plague made it easier to pay some of these (often fixed amounts), unless they were raised or paid as a percentage of the value of transactions. Taxes in money could in any case not survive the inflation after AD 275. The taxes on craftsmen that were introduced in the fourth century and levied in gold (the so-called *chrysargyron*) survived until the end of the fifth century. Capitation taxes were not successfully introduced until after the Arab Conquest. The state in Late Antiquity did increase taxes in money on land, as we have already seen.

16.4.4 *Crops Grown*

We can compare the crops mentioned in leases from Middle Egypt (Rowlandson 1996 for Oxyrhynchite leases from the first three centuries of Roman rule; my own figures for Hermopolite leases through the fourth century) with what we have seen already for Ptolemaic Kerkeosiris: wheat 46%, barley 7.25%, fodder 38.5%, and other crops (including flax) 8.25%. The only significant difference with Kerkeosiris is in the categories of fodder (much higher in the leases) and vegetables (much lower). I assume that leases (more those from the Oxyrhynchite nome than those from the Hermopolite nome) tend to stress simple crop rotation (leases for two years or a multiple of two years appear in the Oxyrhynchite nome as the only alternative to one-year leases) – alternating grain with fodder crops every other year – more than would occur in real life. The figures for Kerkeosiris are therefore more typical for Greco-Roman Egypt as a whole.

Leases of arable land in private hands specifying a rent in kind are numerous enough for statistical treatment (van Minnen 2000a), especially if we limit ourselves to rent for the years in which grain was grown (*pace* Harper 2016, p. 830, who includes rents in money for other crops in his calculations). There are hundreds of such leases. Rents in kind (usually a specific amount of wheat per *aroura*, rather than a share, which is mainly attested in the fourth century) are highest in the first two centuries of Roman rule (when the leased amounts of land are also the highest, which would lead one to expect lower rents) – significantly higher

than what appears in leases from the Ptolemaic Period, when there was more competition from public land, but also higher than in Late Antiquity, when there was no more competition from public land (in Late Antiquity, the amounts of leased land are the lowest, which would lead one to expect higher rents; see Hickey 2012, p. 76, figure 4). The relatively low rent in Late Antiquity demonstrates the “bargaining power” (cf. Kehoe 1995) of the now less numerous tenants. Bowman (2009, p. 197) suggests that rents may have gone down with increased privatization, but in fact they should have gone up when the state as landowner (always charging less in rent than private landowners) disappeared as a competitor in the fourth century. It is easier to assume that rents went down because the population and the number of tenants went down. The third century witnessed a modest decline in rent levels, presumably in the wake of the Antonine plague, which helped the now fewer tenants get a better deal from the landowners, but the fourth century is much worse. This must be related to the freefall of the currency after AD 275.

In addition to arable land, about 5% of all land under cultivation was used for vineyards, and at most another 5% as orchards (most importantly, olive orchards). At a conservative 100 hl. of wine per aroura, 5% of, say, 8 million arouras would yield enough for the entire population of Egypt, if they were not drinking as much wine as in, say, Italy (but, rather, more beer), plus a bit for export, mainly in the form of vinegar. There was some import of wine as well, mainly to Alexandria (Dzierzbicka 2018).

16.4.5 *Trade Within and Beyond Egypt*

The first two centuries of Roman rule saw an expansion of trade. The integration of the Roman Empire stimulated the flow of goods within the empire and even from beyond its borders. The trade with Africa, Arabia, and India catered especially (but not exclusively) to the elite in Italy, which was the least taxed and therefore the richest group in the empire (see Grønlund Evers 2017 on trade with India). Egypt was one of the main conduits for this trade, and it also traded various luxuries and staple goods of its own to other provinces and to Italy. The so-called Muziris papyrus (SB XVIII 13167; see van Minnen 2008, p. 237 with a translation on p. 241, based on Rathbone 2001; see now also Morelli 2011) highlights the importance of this trade in monetary terms for the Egyptian creditors (presumably Alexandrians), the entrepreneurs, and the Roman state – which kept almost a quarter of the goods imported from outside the empire. At a value of almost 7 million Egyptian drachmas for three-quarters, the total cargo on the *Muziris* was worth 9.3 million, of which the state kept 2.3 million. The transport of goods from Red Sea ports through the Eastern Desert to Koptos was facilitated by the increased control of the desert routes by the Roman state, which primarily served its own interests (geopolitical control of the Red Sea and the supply of precious building materials such as porphyry), but perhaps inadvertently also helped trade (Chapter 15).

With regard to the internal trade in Roman Egypt, sweeping generalizations are much harder to make. The same goes for crafts and industry. Although in aggregate the textile industry was the second biggest item in the Egyptian “balance sheet,” it is hard to establish its relative importance in comparison with agriculture, the biggest. Relatively many urban craftsmen and women were involved in textile production and trade (Figure 16.1; see van Minnen 2007, p. 222 for a comparison between the occupational structure of Late

Antique Krokodilopolis and Hermopolis, major district capitals (36.1–35.6% in the food trades; 18.8–17.85% in the textile trades; 17.0–17.85% in the construction trades; and 5.85–5.9% in the river trades), and of Aphrodite, a smaller town (16.5%, 8.35%, 7.85%, and 19%, respectively)), but we should not underestimate the importance of such crafts in villages. Meanwhile, in Alexandria, the production of glass and luxury pottery may have been as important as the production of textiles, but we know little about it.

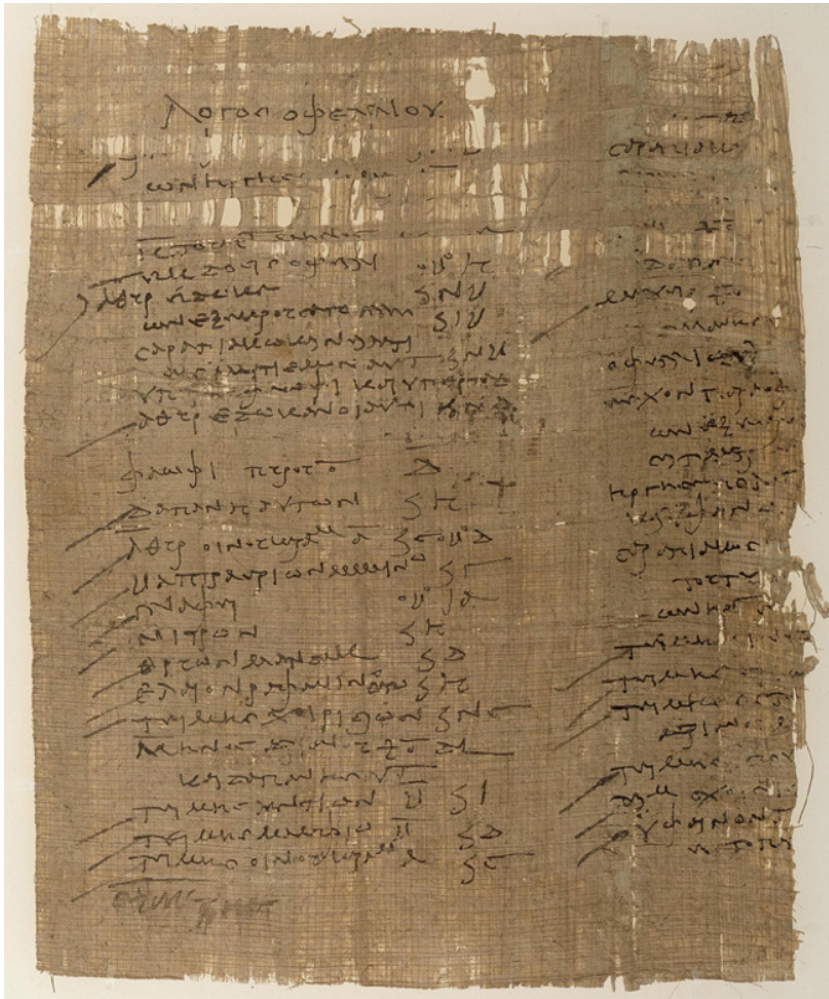


Figure 16.1 Accounts of a textile establishment. The cash outlays were carefully verified, as shown by the oblique lines in the left margins. In the left column, one can read “natron” (*nitron*), which was used in cleaning textiles. After AD 130. Source: courtesy Ann Arbor, University of Michigan, Graduate Library P. 1933, cf. SB XVI 12314. Image digitally reproduced with the permission of the Papyrology Collection, Graduate Library, University of Michigan.

16.4.6 Roman Theadelphia as a Case Study

Theadelphia is among the best-documented villages in Roman Egypt (Sharp 1999b). A sizeable portion of the land around it was devoted to viticulture. In the first century AD, we find an entrepreneur who owns and leases vineyards (P.Soterichus). In the second, there are hundreds of landowners on record who also own vineyards (BGU IX). Once we get into the third century, however, the variety of owners disappears, and the vineyards appear as the property of an absentee landowner, Appianus from Alexandria, whose manager in the capital of the Fayum employed one Heroninos, whose archive survives (studied by Rathbone 1991; see also Kehoe 1992 and Chapter 17). We also happen to know how much land at Theadelphia was taxed in money in the early third century. Sharp (1999b, p. 188), and in his wake Rathbone (2007a, p. 703), Kehoe (2010, pp. 313–314), and Bowman (2013, pp. 238–239), has identified the land taxed in money as vineyards and orchards, implying that vineyards at Theadelphia more than doubled between the second and early third centuries, but one must not forget that the village also had a large amount of pasture land, which happened too to be taxed in money.

My own hunch is that Appianus, in the third century, never owned as much as the hundreds of owners in the second century taken together, but that he did acquire many of the vineyards previously owned by them but left derelict after the Antonine plague. This made it much more difficult for viticulture to be profitable, because the necessary investments were no longer matched by a ready market for wine. Less cautious investors with deep pockets – who could use economies of scale, replace expensive (because fewer) people with technology (*mechanai*, mechanical water-lifting devices), and tap into a wider network to sell the surplus – may have been interested in continuing (not expanding) viticulture at Theadelphia (van Minnen 2000a, p. 215; compare Rathbone 2007b, who interprets the *mechanai* as rational and a sign of progress; note that Malouta and Wilson 2013, p. 299, figure 9.21, detect a peak in water-lifting devices in Late Antiquity, although this is largely a consequence of changes in the nature of the documentation), but only for a while (viticulture there disappears in the later third century; note also that Appianus, for all his investments in the Fayum, took a considerable part of the surplus out of there and spent it in Alexandria, unlike the hundreds of owners in the second century, who spent their surplus locally).

There are two important points to make here. First, the expansion of viticulture at Theadelphia is the only change (other than rents in kind on private land) that scholars have thought to be able to document for the same place and the same type of agriculture – and it turns out to be a mistake. This should give us pause in cases where such change (expansion or contraction) is even more illusory (where evidence from one place and time is compared to evidence from another) or entirely made up (in the absence of evidence). Second, even more importantly, hundreds of landowners also owned vineyards at Theadelphia in the second century. How did they do it? Partly by “régie directe,” but mostly by leasing vineyards to tenants (as we find for Soterichus earlier). Those leases would have been sharecropping arrangements for two-thirds, three-quarters, or more of the harvest, and would therefore have been more like labor contracts than leases of arable land, so as not to disincentivize investments on the part of the landowners (as leases of arable land tend to do, where often everything is left to the tenants). This shows that it

was perfectly possible for relatively small owners of land to make a profit by selling small quantities of surplus wine, even if just locally or within the Fayum (e.g. to the nome capital Krokodilopolis), in the second century, when the population and the use of the land both peaked. In other words, the market for wine worked so well in the second century that it was easy to tap into for even the smallest owners of vineyards.

The idea that economic prosperity depends on big landowners is far more dangerous than the misinterpretation of the figure for land taxed in money that is behind the idea that viticulture expanded between the second and the third centuries. Prosperity depends on big landowners only when things go badly and major investments are required to keep the economy from grinding to a halt (as in third-century Theadelphia). When things are going well again, the added weight of big landowners is no longer essential.

16.5 Late Antiquity: Recovery and Decline

The population may have reached a nadir in the fourth century, before the stabilization of the currency and, therefore, the economy. Although there are no demographic data for Late Antiquity, we can safely assume that the population grew from the fourth to the sixth century. We have already included some data on taxation in Late Antiquity in our discussion of the Roman Period. Public land, as we have also seen, had almost disappeared by the fourth century. Imperial property, now owned by members of the imperial family rather than imperial favorites, is not well known (Azzarello 2012). Private landownership in Late Antiquity is much better attested, thanks to the Hermopolite *Landlisten* of the fourth century and other such lists from Hermopolis and Aphrodite, as well as the increased numbers of leases from the Hermopolite and Herakleopolite nomes and the archive of the Apiones of Oxyrhynchos. But there are complicating factors, because eventually the biggest landowners were required to act as the intermediaries of smaller ones, and their papers do not always allow us to separate their own *oikos* (estate) from what they only administered for the state.

If we consider the areas from which our evidence traditionally derives, Middle Egypt is now more important than the Fayum, because the evidence from Middle Egypt continues unabatedly from the third through the fourth centuries. For Hermopolis, we have family archives for all of Late Antiquity; the *Landlisten* in particular provide a snapshot of the landownership situation at the beginning of this period – all traditionally public land was now private, and hundreds of smaller urban landowners appear side by side with a few bigger ones. By extrapolating these data to all of the Hermopolite nome, we see that urban landowners accounted for only 30% of the land – the rest was owned by thousands of smaller landowners residing in the villages. We gain an idea of the wealth of the richest family in Hermopolis thanks to a claim made by a petitioner that she was the richest landowner in the Hermopolite nome (van Minnen 2009a). In the *Landlisten*, her family is indeed the richest listed, but their collective wealth is a far cry from the wealth of the Apiones in the Oxyrhynchite nome two centuries later – the Apiones were indeed exceptional for Egypt proper. Even if it is true that they were not as rich as the traditional Roman elite in Rome, they were nonetheless part of the new Roman elite in Constantinople.

The family in Hermopolis with the biggest property in the *Landlisten* also accounts for the most sizeable landownership in a *pagus* (smaller district) far from the *metropolis* itself. The Apiones are again different in that they own land not only throughout the whole Oxyrhynchite nome, but also in other nearby nomes. This has to be put in the context of the disappearance of absentee landowners from Alexandria in the Late Antique evidence from Middle Egypt. The property of (most) landowners contracted to their own nome and even to the immediate vicinity of the nome capital where they resided, even if some of them invested in more vineyards close to the *metropolis* itself (in order to raise cash with the help of a crop such as wine so as to pay increased taxes in money). While the Apiones still take some of the profits from agriculture out of the Oxyrhynchite nome, as their more modest counterparts in earlier centuries had done, there is little evidence that other, even big landowners did so in Late Antiquity.

The evidence for the fifth century shows some improvements (e.g. a much reduced number of sharecropping arrangements, coupled with more rents in money). Prices in gold are lower (or back at their pre-inflation level) by the end of the fourth century, and remain stable until the end of Late Antiquity. This made it easier to live for very many people in the cities and villages, where tenants had no qualms in paying rents in gold; this is especially astonishing in view of the fact that the biggest price drop (almost 40% between the fourth and the sixth century) was for wheat. Fourth-century prices are high, and this should not be taken as a sign of growth (as in capitalism), but of crisis (as in feudalism; see Kula 1976). Ditto for low prices: bad for capitalism, good for feudalism.

When we get to the sixth century, the best evidence continues to come from the Hermopolite nome, because the many leases there are similar to earlier ones. But scholars have usually focused on two other towns: Aphrodite in the Antaeopolite nome, which is not well known earlier, and Oxyrhynchos, where the bulk of the evidence comes from the archive of the Apiones. A quirk in the evidence has given us only a few leases from Oxyrhynchos, whereas in Late Antique Hermopolis they continue to be as numerous as, or more abundant than, in the Roman Period. This allows us to trace changes in the Hermopolite nome across a vast expanse of time, unlike anywhere else in Greco-Roman Egypt.

We notice, for instance, an increase in the number of leases of arable land that specify rent in money. That means that the tenants themselves were able to commercialize the surplus from the land they leased before they handed the rent over to the landowner. Naturally, landowners would also have been able to commercialize the surplus. By Late Antiquity, land was far more heavily taxed than ever before, and the increases in the taxes on land were all in money. The Apiones, the wealthiest family in Late Antique Oxyrhynchos, the only Egyptian family ever to have produced a consul (in Constantinople), and presumably the wealthiest family in Greco-Roman Egypt (not counting Alexandria), derived by far the largest part of their income from the Oxyrhynchite and nearby nomes via (presumably long-term) lease arrangements on arable land. They too were strapped for cash, and must have passed the buck to their tenants, who somehow managed to commercialize the surplus from the land they rented.

It is an exaggeration to state that the Apiones “controlled the collection of taxes to amass great stores of gold, which they then reinvested in agriculture, particularly viticulture” (Kehoe 2013, p. 36). The “great stores of gold” went to the state, and the wealth of the Apiones *derived* from agriculture. By the time we see the *oikos* of the Apiones in

action, some of the profits indeed derive from viticulture (but see Hickey 2012, p. 158, who estimates that a maximum 6% of the income of the Oxyrhynchite estate derived from sales of wine). This means that the Apiones had to interact with the market for staples as well, either directly or via their tenants. They also needed more and more *solidi* to pay increased taxes in the sixth century. Most of these they acquired from their tenants, including those leasing vineyards from them. The Apiones were strictly traditional in the sense that their practices did not differ from those of absentee landowners in the first two centuries of Roman rule (only the third century was different, if we go by the Appianus estate, which derived a larger part of its income from the sale of wine). The market in staples such as wheat was not insignificant, but because so much of it happened at the level of the tenants rather than the bigger landowners, it remains invisible in the record.

FURTHER READING

For agriculture, Schnebel (1925) remains essential. There is no comprehensive study of trade or industry, but see Sidebotham (2011) and Reil (1913), respectively. For the Ptolemaic Period, Préaux (1939) and Manning (2003a) exemplify two contrasting approaches; the former also covers taxation. Muhs (2016) covers pharaonic Egypt and the Ptolemaic Period. For taxation in general, see Chapter 10. For a particularly rich study of a village in the second century BC, see Crawford (1971). For the differences between the Ptolemaic and Roman Periods, see especially Monson (2012b). For my own views on the Early Roman Period and Late Antiquity, see van Minnen (2000a) (inspired by Rowlandson 1996 and the “social arithmetic” of Carrié 1997) and van Minnen (2006, restated in 2008). Harper (2016) covers the same ground, but (even) more ambitiously. Taxation in the Roman Period is treated exhaustively in Wallace (1938a), which is in need of a major overhaul. Rathbone (1997) is authoritative on prices in the Roman Period, and Rathbone (2007b) attempts to integrate archeological evidence for the same period. For a stimulating study of a village in the second and third centuries AD, see Schubert (2007). Two important archives from Roman Tebtynis are the subject of unpublished dissertations by Toepel (1973) (grapheion archive) and W.S. Bagnall (1974) (descendants of Patron). The third-century archive of Heroninos is the subject of Rathbone (1991). For the fourth century, see Bagnall (1985b) on villages in the Fayum (Bagnall 1993a covers many other aspects) and Bowman (1985) on landownership in the Hermopolite nome (supplemented by Bagnall 1992). For Late Antiquity, see Banaji (2001) and Hickey (2012) for two contrasting approaches. Taxation is treated to some extent in the introduction to P.Reg.Fisc.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

Life Portraits: People at Work

Katelijnn Vandorpe

Egypt may be a gift of the Nile, but in Greco-Roman times the economy was stimulated by the development of new areas such as the Fayum oasis, by the expansion of the transport system in desert regions, and by the successful exploitation of quarries and mines (Chapters 15 and 16). People active in these remote areas left their private or professional archives and share with us their personal experiences. In parallel with the monetization of the countryside, the Ptolemies developed a wide network of banks across the country (Chapter 14). The people who worked in the bank sector have been identified in a series of studies by Bogaert (1994a), but here we shall glance through their official archives, which show the professionalism of these employees. Textiles was already a key industry in pharaonic times, and it remained a successful export product afterwards, but here also major changes occurred, when the Greeks gave wool production a boost (Box 17.1). Some weavers' archives are discussed at the end of this chapter.

17.1 Job Opportunities in the Fayum Oasis

The Fayum is an enormous depression in the Western Desert of about 1800 km². It was completely filled with water 7000 years ago, hence the name “The Lake”, *Piom* or *Phiom* in Egyptian, Fayum in Arabic. It has shrunk over the centuries into what is now the Birket Qarun, a lake of just over 200 km². Thus, Egypt's largest oasis was created. Farmland was reclaimed by a network of channels and sluices, primarily by the builder of the Hawara pyramid, the Middle Kingdom pharaoh Amenemhat III, and by the early Ptolemies (see Chapter 15).

Box 17.1 Textiles and Textile Archeology.

by Maria Papadopoulou

Due to their functional, esthetic, and symbolic value, archeological textiles are studied both as organic material objects and as cultural signifiers. This broad category of objects includes clothing items, bed covers, cushions, and wall hangings, but also basketry, cordage, matting, the rigging of vessels, and leather. The study of archeological textiles enables an integrated approach to many aspects of the everyday life and cultural beliefs of the societies that produced and consumed them. One of the central aims of textile archeology is to reconstruct the *chaîne opératoire* of textile production (i.e. the procurement of fibers, tools, and dyes) and the techniques applied (e.g. weaving, felting, knitting).

The archeological record shows that textiles are best preserved in salt (e.g. Hallstatt, Austria), ice (e.g. Altai mountains, Siberia), and arid climatic conditions (e.g. multiple sites in Egypt, Middle East, China, and Peru). The dry climate of Egypt has helped preserve its rich textile culture of almost five millennia in a practically unbroken continuity. Textiles from ancient Egyptian sites started surfacing in nineteenth-century excavations and surveys. Few examples of clothing survive from the Ptolemaic Period, but the textile heritage of Roman and Late Antique Egypt is one of the best represented globally (the bibliography on Late Antique Egyptian textiles is massive; for a representative example, see Schrenk 2006). In recent years, analytical methods such as radiocarbon dating (De Moor and Fluck 2007), X-ray radiography, optical microscopy, scanning electron microscopy, and forensic photography have made exact dating and the identification of the dyes and fibers used in the production of ancient textiles possible.

Pharaonic Egypt was especially known for flax. With the arrival of the Greeks, wool became more common, and with it the use of natural dyes, since wool is much better for dyeing than linen. Red was obtained from madder, which grows abundantly in Egypt, and purple from indigo; red from the insect kermes is a sign of a later dating. Murex shells produced a dark blue shade, known as “true purple.” This was extremely expensive, and therefore rare (Cardon et al. 2011). The best preserved and largest surviving textiles from burial sites, notably painted linen mummy shrouds, come from Roman Egypt. Cotton and silk were introduced possibly during the first centuries AD.

While the loom was the flagship of the taskscape of any ancient Egyptian textile workshop, only small models of looms from graves – as well as spindles and loom weights – survive. Pharaonic Egypt knew the use of both the horizontal and the vertical loom, but it is not known whether the warp-weighted loom, which was the most widespread in the North of Europe and the Aegean from prehistoric times, traveled to Egypt in the Greco-Roman Period. Top spindles were used in Egypt from prehistory; the drop spindle, in which the whorl is placed at the bottom of the spindle, became common in Greco-Roman times. Compound weaves, sprang (used for caps), and needle binding (for socks) are a few of the complex techniques used in Egyptian Roman and Late Antique textiles. Most Late Antique tapestry weaves found in Egypt were produced locally. Their iconography, however, often belonged

to a wider repertoire. The typical wool yarn in Late Antique Egypt was s-spun (i.e. the thread was spun anticlockwise).

Apart from the material and visual sources, Hellenistic, Roman, and Late Antique papyri, ostraca, and other written sources – such as Diocletian's *Price edict* and the *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea* – offer detailed information on the production, consumption, and trade of textiles in Egypt. Lists of clothing (e.g. from marriage contracts) provide a wealth of information on the personal wardrobes of the people of Hellenistic, Roman, and Late Antique Egypt (Prichard 2006). For Oxyrhynchos, the production of textiles was quantified by van Minnen (1986).

Most Hellenistic, Roman, and Late Antique Egyptian textiles in museum collections are difficult to trace back to their original find spots. Museums specializing in Egyptian textile collections include the Egyptian Antiquities Museum in Cairo and the Museo Egizio in Turin; university museum collections include the Petrie Museum in London and the Kelsey Museum of the University of Michigan; and private collections specializing in the textile heritage of Late Antique Egypt include the Katoen Natie in Antwerp; see Figure 17.1).



Figure 17.1 A Picasso *avant la lettre*. Tapestry wall-hanging showing a mythological scene with Greek warriors and Amazons on horseback. The scene is framed by Corinthian columns. C-14 dating AD 420–560 (95% probability), Egypt. Wool and linen, 115 × 130 cm. Source: cf. Schrenk 2013. © The Phoebus Foundation.

One of the largest groups of textiles ever excavated from a single site comes from the Imperial Roman quarry zone of Mons Claudianus. Around 50 000 well-preserved textiles from the first three centuries AD were brought to light between 1987 and 1993. Smaller groups of textiles come from numerous excavation sites of Roman *praesidia* (forts) in the Eastern Desert, scattered along the caravan routes connecting the Nile to the Red Sea ports of Berenike (Wild and Wild 1998) and Myos Hormos: Mons Claudianus (Bender Jorgensen 2000), Didymoi, Maximianon, and Krokodilo. Late Antique Egyptian textile find spots include big urban centers, provincial centers, and cemeteries: Antinoopolis, Panopolis, Karanis, Kellis, Mostagedda, and the Meroitic site of Qustul, to name just a few. Alexandria is thought to have figured prominently among the great centers for the export trade of cloth.

17.1.1 *A Struggling Employee: The Engineer Kleon*

Immigrants settled or found jobs in the remote area of the Fayum. One of them was the engineer Kleon, whose professional archive got mixed up with his private papers; it was taken over by his successor Theodoros (260–237 BC; TM Arch 122; P.Kleon, with translations by Van Beek). Kleon and Theodoros were responsible for the planning and supervision of maintenance works and repairs to the newly developed irrigation infrastructure. They negotiated contracts for work and received numerous letters and complaints, and they kept drafts or copies of their own letters in a register of correspondence; their administration booked payments not only to people working on dikes and canals, but also to stone-cutters, who provided building material for irrigation infrastructure.

It was not an easy job. They had to face many problems and many complaints, and there was always a time pressure. The archives contain polite requests, such as the one where Kleon is asked to provide 30 ropes for the reparation of three sluice gates; the ropes, 10 for each sluice, were needed to lift them. The matter was urgent, because the Nile inundation was approaching (P.Kleon 21). A certain Thamous informed Kleon about a dike that had been washed away, adding that “I have written you so that you do not hold us responsible” (P.Kleon 33). Thus, the responsibility became Kleon’s – as in the following impatient request: Panakestor, the manager of a large estate, complained, for the second time, that the estate could not be irrigated because the bends in one of the main canals had not been construed, and this was clearly Kleon’s fault. Panakestor threatened to inform the estate owner, no less a person than the minister of finances, about Kleon’s lack of responsibility (P.Kleon 17). Kleon also had issues with his workmen: 140 stone-cutters refused to finish their work, because they had no food; they did receive payment in advance, but they consumed everything, since nobody showed them what to do. In the meantime, the minister of finances urged him to complete the works (P.Kleon 49). Some foremen also had complaints: the superintendent wanted them and their men to cut hard types of stone, while the superintendent’s own men were allowed to cut soft rock. The hard stone had ruined their tools (P.Kleon 51). In another letter, Demetrios, who was responsible for the provisions of a group of stone-cutters, had been attacked and “treated disrespectfully before a crowd”; if Kleon did not take action to protect him, “none of the works will be finished” (P.Kleon 54). Kleon himself seems to have reacted calmly in his correspondence,

even when stone-carrying ships were not available and hence works were delayed with the king about to visit the Fayum (P.Kleon 86, end of 253 BC).

The pressure of work took its toll. Kleon's wife Metrodora and their sons, who lived in Alexandria, were worried about him. When Kleon fell into disgrace with the king, they tried to comfort him. Kleon asked his wife to come to him, but her answer was disheartening: "I would have come, leaving all behind, but now I am immensely frightened about how things will end up for you"; she had heard that the king had come to the Fayum and treated Kleon harshly (P.Kleon 3). One of his sons begged him to come home for good, or "for at least the period when the Nile retreats, at which time there is no danger" (P.Kleon 11).

17.1.2 *A Jack-of-all-Trades: Zenon Son of Agreophon*

One of Kleon's correspondents was Zenon son of Agreophon (P.Kleon 19), whose papers have been uncovered in the Fayum village of Philadelphieia (263–229 BC; TM Arch 256; see also Chapter 18). Zenon's archive is an archive of superlatives. With its 2000 mainly Greek texts, it is the largest papyrus archive, informing us on a wide range of job opportunities in the newly developed area of the Fayum. To start with, Zenon himself was a man of many jobs. Born in Caunus in Caria (Asia Minor), he immigrated to Egypt, where he started to work for Apollonios, the minister of finances. One job followed another (in Palestine, Alexandria, the Delta) until – after a sick leave – he ended up in the Fayum as the manager of Apollonios' new large estate of 10 000 arouras, or about 2750 ha. Even then, he was a jack-of-all-trades, with a great number of basic skills. He supervised the estate works (infrastructure, irrigation, cultivation...), a large group of workmen, and the expansion and urbanization of the local village, but he also privately invested in numerous enterprises, such as money-lending, brewing, exploitation of bathhouses, small soldiers' estates, weaving factories, small livestock-raising, leasing out of boat(s), and control of fishing rights on the lake (Fournet 2015) – activities he continued after his discharge in 248/7 BC.

His archive is at the same time a window through which we meet his superiors, his colleagues, and his employees, all of them addressing Zenon with an order or request. Let us have a look at his job as supervisor of the urbanization of the village of Philadelphieia. The orders that emanate from the minister Apollonios are short. In one of the first letters to Zenon, he asks his employee, somewhat proudly, to show to a distinguished visitor the place "where we want to construe the temple for the king and the (queen) Philadelphus, ... and the avenue (*dromos*) and the sacred grove" (Pap.Lugd.Bat. XX 28). In a surprisingly brief letter, Apollonios asks Zenon to give the order to build a Sarapis temple near the Isis temple, with a common avenue for both (P.Cairo Zen. II 59168). In another brief letter, the minister gives the vague order "to build a stoa ... in a place (indicated by) the architect"; Zenon endorsed the letter with the summary, "(about the) stoa" (P.Cairo Zen. II 59200). He was also ordered to plant fir trees – at least 300 of them – in the park and round the vineyard and olive groves, "for the (fir)-tree has a striking appearance and will be of service to the king" (i.e. it may be used for shipbuilding); Zenon's endorsement has "(about) fir trees" (P.Cairo Zen. II 59157 with translation). The vice-minister of finances Diotimos wanted to build a luxurious villa in Philadelphieia: the floor of the two bath rooms, for

instance, was tessellated, and that of the women's bathroom was modeled after the mosaic floor of the royal palace in Alexandria, having an open poppy of two cubits in diameter at its center (P.Cairo Zen. IV 59665). Diotimos' orders to Zenon are much more detailed than those of Apollonios. At some point, the vice-minister did not agree with the plans of the architect. One of the courtyards was too small, a stable was lacking, the location of the gateway and the bakery was to be altered, and space was needed for a garden round the villa; Zenon's endorsement has "(about the) villa" (P.Cairo Zen. II 59193).

Zenon had to negotiate the contracts with the workmen. Some applied for a job in Philadelphiea. Two weavers, for instance, wanted to settle in the town "because they heard about the fame of the city (*polis*)" and that the manager Zenon "was honest and just" (PSI IV 431; for an application by a potter, see P.Cairo Zen. III 59500). In other sectors (e.g. brick-makers and masons), there was a shortage of. Those with the requisite skills were forced to work, with the aid of policemen. For example, five Egyptian brick-makers from Memphis had to swear a royal oath to Zenon that they would remain available in Philadelphiea until they had performed the contractual services (P.Cairo Zen. I 59133).

As in the case of Kleon and Theodoros, a great many complaints reached Zenon, but they show due respect. The carpet-weaver Pais accused his colleague Nechthembes of fraud. The latter had apparently shortened the length and breadth of his carpets, so that they did not fit a couch. When the carpets were weighed, the fraud put some part of the loom into the scale to make them heavier: "it would be just to cut off his hands," judged Pais, adding that he had informed Zenon to prevent the latter from being cheated – and also, of course, to gain work himself (P.Cairo Zen. III 59484). Philadelphiea had a large brewery, and the beer was sold to local customers in some 50 establishments. Haynchis, an elderly woman, ran one of the local pubs. But her daughter, who supported her, left for a man who already had another wife and children. Since then, Haynchis had made a loss, and she begged Zenon to help her because of her old age, and to return the girl to her (P.Lond. VII 1976).

Other letters to Zenon have more positive requests, showing the enthusiasm of his employees. The Egyptian farmer Horos, using an Egyptian brush, writes a charming letter to Zenon in poor Greek, asking him to come and have a look at a huge field of almost 36 ha full of poppy flowers; he assures Zenon that he will enjoy the sight (P.Cair. Zen. II 59243). Poppy was cultivated at that time as an oil-yielding crop. Another employee of Zenon's, Menon, underlines how well he has carried out his duties and promises to "manage even better in future." He asks to have part of his salary paid in sweet wine, in order that he "may pour a libation on behalf of you (Zenon) and Apollonios to the spirit of the place" (P.Lond. VII 2041 with translation).

Zenon was apparently a competent manager. He played a pivotal role in the local community and was the main contact person for Apollonios and other high officials in Alexandria, who wanted to turn the large estate and the town of Philadelphiea into a model enterprise and a model city. His job seems to have been even more demanding than that of Kleon and Theodoros. He could not fall back on a supporting family, as did Kleon. Apparently, Zenon was not married. His father Agreophon still lived abroad, and visited his sons on one or more occasions (see Chapter 6); his little brother Epharmostos, who received a Greek education in Alexandria, was supported by Zenon, and afterwards came to live in Philadelphiea; he was also an active entrepreneur, but he died well before his

older brother. Zenon may have had another brother, Apollonios, who took over his papers at some stage (after 240 BC). He also had the company of a hunting dog, Tauron, who died a heroic death while protecting his patron against a wild boar: “after he (Tauron) had given his murderer to Hades, he died, as is established custom for an Indian (hound).” This quote comes from an epitaph Zenon had composed for his dog, for which the poet – a professional – presented two versions (P.Cairo Zen. IV 59532; LDAB 6935; translation by Pepper 2010, who proposes to identify the poet as the Apollonios of P.Mich. I 77).

17.1.3 *A Seasoned Employee: The Manager Heroninos*

In Roman times, the irrigation network in the Fayum saw no more large-scale changes or additions, but it was maintained well into the second century. At the end of that century, probably due to the drying up of the climate, the network started to deteriorate, and the stretches alongside the desert could no longer be sufficiently irrigated. The farmland became substantially reduced, and many villages along the outskirts were deserted by the end of the fourth century.

Several archives of the third century show that the region was still active at that time. Egypt had seen the rise of new large estates belonging to the high elite in the *metropoleis* and Alexandria (see Chapter 16). They left the management of these estates in the hands of professionals, as had the minister Apollonios in Ptolemaic times.

One of the large landowners was Aurelius Appianus, of equestrian rank, who lived in Alexandria and had estates in several nomes. The one in the Fayum is estimated at 4500 ha (about 2.5% of the total Fayum area). While the gift estate of the minister Apollonios – allotted to him by the Ptolemaic king – was a newly created domain, Appianus’ estate was gradually developed around many small parcels. It was run by a general manager, Alypios – an equestrian as well – who relied on an administration based at the nome capital, Ptolemais Euergetis. The Fayum estate, mainly vineyards, was further divided into smaller units (*phrontides*), which stood under the direction of local managers (*phrontistai*) in the villages, among them Heroninos. The latter supervised the unit in Theadelphia, about 100 ha in all, including some 20 vineyards; he was also the manager of a few other, smaller estates in the area. His papers, like Zenon’s, constitute an archive of superlatives: he left us the largest archive of Roman Egypt, encompassing more than 1000 papyri – still unpublished, for the larger part (c. AD 199–275; TM Arch 103; Rathbone 1991).

The archives of Heroninos and his colleagues testify to the further professionalization of the managerial system. While the local manager was responsible for agricultural operations, the maintenance of the estate’s property, and the permanent staff, the general manager made visits of inspection and supervised the sale of the surplus of produce (including the marketing of wine), for which he had transport organized. The accounts are no longer rudimentary lists of receipts and expenditure; they are the “most sophisticated” accounts from Classical Antiquity, and testify to what Rathbone (1991, p. 387) calls “economic rationalism”: they allow the reader to “check on the efficiency, measured in monetary terms, with which each *phrontistes* was managing production on his unit. They contain much data which could have been used as the basis for making economically rational decisions.”

As in the case of Zenon, Heroninos was an active entrepreneur, but many of the private enterprises run by the former had now become side businesses of the estate proper, and not of Heroninos as a private person (e.g. the control of fishing rights, the running of bathhouses, the leasing out of utilities and of sheep).

Heroninos received his orders mainly from the general manager, but Appianus also contacted him on a number of occasions, and although an absentee estate owner, he was impressively well informed about the ins and outs of his property. The overtone of his letters is sometimes joking: “What you sent up was not worth the wasting of the time of a man and an ass, all for four little baskets of bitter little figs” (PFlor. II 176; translation Rathbone 1991, p. 86). Heroninos’ superiors must have appreciated his work, since he was active as one of Appianus’ local managers for about 19 years, hence the familiar contact with his colleagues and the staff of the central administration. Thus, one of his colleagues asks “brother” (*adelphos*) Heroninos to send him two jars of good wine for a friend who came over (SB VI 9415 [17]). But the general manager Alypius put Heroninos under pressure when necessary: “You were ordered once before to report the quantities of corn stored up and dispatched, but you neglected the order, having perhaps a bad conscience. Do it this time, however, lest you be compelled to do it in the presence of a soldier” (Sel. Pap. I 144 with translation), or “if you are guilty of any negligence and do not get the receipts, your old offenses also will come in for punishment. I pray for your health” (Sel. Pap. I 142 with translation).

We are not informed about Heroninos’ personal life; he must have been a free man belonging to a prosperous family, and probably worked in Appianus’ mansion in Theadelphia.

The archives discussed in this section ended up in the cellar of a house (Zenon’s), were left on a rubbish dump (Heroninos’), or were reused as second-hand paper in mummy cases (Kleon’s and Theodoros’). They lay buried for many centuries until they were discovered during excavation campaigns or by native diggers around 1900 (for these Fayum archives, see Vandorpe et al. 2015).

17.2 Job Opportunities in the Eastern Desert

The Eastern Desert has temperatures as high as 43 °C in summer. A trip through it was necessary to reach the harbors of the Red Sea, an essential part of the Roman trade route to and from the East (see Chapter 15). The desert’s unpaved roads, guarded by soldiers, were provided with wells and fortified motels. One had to pay for their use. People who had their job in the desert could reside in, for instance, the Roman hamlets of the Mons Claudianus (Figure 17.2) and nearby Mons Porphyrites. At the Mons Claudianus, workmen of the local quarry were based. Its gray granodiorite was employed for columns in high-profile projects, such as Rome’s Pantheon, Trajan’s basilica, and the Villa Hadriana in Tivoli. A large animal enclosure was built there, too, to give shelter to both cattle and the draught animals that dragged the heavy columns, weighing up to 100 tons, to the Nile over a distance of 120 km. One such transport of a column of 50 ft (about 16 m) to the Nile settlement of Kaine (modern Qena) is described in a Roman papyrus; apparently there was not enough food for the large number of draught animals and the governor of another nome is urgently asked for help (P.Giss. I 69).



Figure 17.2 Mons Claudianus. The fortified camp seen from the north. Source: Image courtesy Adam Bülow-Jacobsen.

The rubbish dumps of the Mons Claudianus have produced thousands of precious witnesses to the daily life in the hamlet, among them ostraca written in Greek and some in Latin (O.Claud. I–IV). The workmen lived there with their families, including children. They had their own Sarapis temple and bathhouse, and the deceased were buried in the local cemetery in a simple grave. School exercises containing verse and prose texts, such as a small part of an Aesopic fable, suggest that due attention was paid to education (O.Claud. I 179–190 and II 409–416). Surprisingly, a great variety of food was available, either imported or locally produced and grown. The soldier Dioskoros, for instance, grew vegetables in his garden, which must have been located near a water source: lettuce, cabbage, endive (or chicory), beets, and others were on the menu (O.Claud. II 224–242, with introduction). But sometimes, there was a shortage of certain products, as when Iason begs Euemeros: “Please, brother, send me bread for (or: in) two days, because there is none here to use or to buy” (O.Claud. II 285).

The *metallon* or quarry zone of Mons Claudianus consisted of several *latomiai* or quarry sites, each having a specific name, such as Bath, Rome, and Traiane. According to a list of about AD 110 (reign of Trajan), 917 people were active in the quarry zone (O.Claud. III: 11–53; Cuvigny 2005b):

- 421 *pagani*, well-paid specialized stone-cutters and masons, recruited in Egypt;
- 400 members of the *familia* (i.e. of the *familia Caesaris*), non-specialized personnel such as water carriers, of foreign or Egyptian origin, sometimes free men, sometimes slaves, probably also convicts;

- 60 soldiers for their protection, including 2 officers; that's about 1 soldier per 13 workmen;
- 1 architect and 35 persons practicing a profession not always directly linked to the quarries, but playing a role in the workmen's daily life in the desert, such as barbers.

Later evidence, of the mid-second century, shows a much lower level of activity, with the number of employees diminished by about 70% (O.Claud. IV, Appendix 2).

Several orders to deliver tools to the quarrymen are preserved: "Issue to Julianus at Bath 20 hammers, equal 20. (Month of) Choiak 19" (O.Claud. IV 814, with translation and with Appendix 1 on the different tools). Other orders involve the distribution of water in bags or jars; although of a larger capacity, the sheep- and goat-skin bags were more easily transportable by draught animals than were jars. The orders were probably handed over to a donkey- or camel-driver, who started his tour around the quarry sites at a well: "(Deliver at) Traiane 2, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1 (bags of water); ... (at) Bath: 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1 (bags of water)" (O.Claud. IV 770). A daily balance sheet summarized the beneficiaries of water, classified by rank, status, and profession: the higher the status, the larger the daily ration, ranging from 2.16 to 6.5 liters in the cold season. Horses and donkeys were likewise attributed a fixed daily ration of 26 and 13 liters, respectively (Cuvigny 2005b).

Sick people were registered by the day, sometimes with their profession and illness: "8 Epeiph: apprentice mason: Hermaiskos, ophthalmitis; stone carrier: Moschion, convalescent; operator of wedges: Agrippa, injured; ... water carrier: Kalpenos, stung by a scorpion..." (O.Claud. II 212). Other lists are notifications of deceased people: "Have died on 24 Phaophi two men: Claudius Aemilianus and Philetos; on the 23rd: Timarchos" (O.Claud. II 211). Fortunately, the lists of sick workmen outnumber by far those of the deceased.

17.3 Job Opportunities in the Financial Sector

With the introduction of money in Egypt, new job opportunities were created, including in the bank sector. Ptolemaic and Roman bankers could work in royal/public, private, or concessionary banks, from local to nome level and beyond. Royal/public bankers cashed tax payments or paid out salaries for soldiers and civil servants; in Ptolemaic times, they also administered private accounts. The Byzantine Period knew a fragmentation of bank institutions (Bogaert 2001).

We are well informed about banking activities, but surprisingly only a few bank archives have come to us, mainly discovered in Middle Egyptian mummy cartonnage. Eleven such archives are so far identified, nine of which date from Ptolemaic and two from Roman times (TM Arch 121, 153, 198, 205, 370, 372, 375, 376, 527, 552; for the papers of Anoubion, see P.Lond. III 1164, pp. 156–167; cf. Bogaert 2001; Geens 2007b). They testify to the professionalism of the job, for which trustworthy persons were needed. In early Ptolemaic times, bankers' assistants had to swear a royal oath promising "to report correctly and justly all payments...; and to deposit these in the bank in Herakleopolis unless I am instructed to disburse any outlay locally; and to give to Kleitarchos (the

banker) an account of all payments, both of income and of expense, and the receipts for whatever I disburse” (SB I 5680; Bagnall and Derow 2004, no. 84, with translation). These promises had to be backed up by sureties (SB III 6277 and 6301). In the same period, transactions were summarized for accounting purposes on a daily basis, written out as a continuous report (e.g. SB XVIII 14041).

A century later, more sophisticated types of accounting are attested. The daily bookkeeping of a royal bank in the Herakleopolite nome is most instructive (140s–130s BC, TM Arch 552; P.Herakl.Bank; Vandompe 2014c). At that time, payments were reckoned in bronze, but people were allowed to pay with silver and gold coins or uncoined silver. Hence, a double bookkeeping was introduced. Payments in precious metals or coins were first converted by the banker into bronze money at a negotiable exchange rate; these conversion transactions were recorded on the verso of a papyrus roll. Then, the banker turned around the roll and entered the actual transaction – always a payment in bronze – on the recto in the following way:

- for each transaction, a new line was taken;
- the name of the account holder was followed by that of the person who was transferring or withdrawing money to or from the account;
- for a transfer, the line was shifted to the left; for a withdrawal, to the right;
- at the end of the line, the sums of transfer or withdrawal were repeated in two columns, which allowed the balance sheet to be drawn up on a daily basis.

The bankers must have had separate files listing the account holders, but such documents have not yet been identified. The two Roman bank archives do not contain the bookkeeping (TM Arch 370 and P.Lond. III 1164): the bankers gathered – in chronological order, and by gluing them together – incoming documents in which e.g. transporters of tax grain acknowledge to have received payment for their services to the state.

17.4 Job Opportunities in a Key Sector: The Textile Industry

While nowadays the textile industry in Western countries is declining, in Antiquity textiles played a significant role in the economy of every society. In private life, they functioned as a kind of “liquid wealth, for they could be readily converted to cash” (Pomeroy 1995; for women in Egypt’s textile sector, see Chapter 22). Linen was in pharaonic Egypt the main material for textiles; flax was grown all over the country. Already in Ptolemaic times, the Greeks imported new breeds of sheep, giving wool production a boost.

Coptic Egypt has yielded numerous, often fragmentary textiles; according to a rough estimate, about 150 000 of these are spread across collections all over the world, although probably only the most attractive ones have survived the filter of the market (Bazinnet 1993). For Egypt’s earlier periods, we are informed about textiles and textile workers mainly through texts, including some archives of professional weavers (*gerdioi*) – all men (TM Arch 176, 186, 249, 573, 574). Weavers were organized in guilds or associations (San Nicolò 1972), and their profession was passed from father to son.

The weavers' archives do not really inform us about professional activities, except for the taxes they had to pay, such as the linen and weaver's tax (a general trade tax on weavers) and, rarely, the dyeing tax (normally to be paid by dyers). One such weaver's tax archive has been found in situ, inside the residence of Phatres in El-Kab – the largest house in the area (AD 132–133, O.Elkab 91–95; TM Arch 186). Weavers also had other sources of income, a “reminder of the economic versatility” of craftsmen in general (Winkler 2015, p. 101). The Theban linen weaver Petechonsis son of Thoteus, for instance, was also engaged in agricultural affairs (19–2 BC; Winkler 2015; TM Arch 573). Conversely, the oil seller Phanesis son of Nechthyrus was active as weaver as well, as he paid the cloth tax on several occasions (233–223 BC; TM Arch 188).

Tryphon son of Dionysios and Thamounis was descended from a weavers' family in Middle Egyptian Oxyrhynchos (25 BC–AD 83; Biscottini 1966; Rowlandson 1998, pp. 112–118; TM Arch 249). Tryphon kept copies of receipts of the taxes he and his family paid through the bank, including the weaver's tax of the “Hippodrome” – the quarter where they lived (e.g. P.Oxy. II 288). We are well informed about his turbulent private life (see Chapter 13). Bad luck hit his career when his eyes began giving him trouble, a serious handicap in his business. After an examination in Alexandria, Tryphon – at the age of 44 – was released by the prefect from certain obligations (either tax liabilities or *corvée*; less probably, military service) because of his “shortness of sight” due to cataract (P.Oxy. I 39). But he was able to continue the family business: shortly afterwards, he bought half of his mother's three-story house (he probably already owned the other half), as well as a loom with two rollers and two beams (P.Oxy. I 99 and II 264). His sons Apion and Thoonis followed in their father's footsteps, the younger being trained – for one year – as a weaver by a colleague of Tryphon (P.Oxy. II 275). What happened thereafter, we do not know, but according to modern astrologers, Apion's horoscope – he was a Capricorn (P.Oxy. II 307, January 3, AD 46) – predicts that he would have changed profession and left the city (Pestman 1989b, pp. 74–78).

FURTHER READING

Several archives contain information about their owner's profession. The following ones may in particular be interesting: the bookkeeping archive of a poultry farm (TM Arch 349); the bookkeeping archive of a farm estate at the Panopolites (350); the archive of Aurelius Apollonios, dealer in livestock (394); the archive of Aurelius Pachymios, purple dealer (36); and the archive of Taembes, beer brewer from Talae (371). For the archives of officials, see Chapter 13. For portraits of women active in the agricultural and non-agricultural economy, see Rowlandson (1998, pp. 218–279).

PART V

**IDENTITY IN
A MULTICULTURAL
ENVIRONMENT**

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

Social Identity and Upward Mobility: Elite Groups, Lower Classes, and Slaves

Sandra Scheuble-Reiter and Silvia Bussi

18.1 Identity: A Definition

Identity has long been a central topic of sociological and anthropological research. Since the 1980s, it has found its way into classics as well. But what is “identity”? It is a subjective feeling that can be individual or collective. Individual identity can be described as a person’s thought about him- or herself or sense of self: the “me.” Collective identities, in contrast, are belonging to a certain group – a family, social class, ethnic or cultural group, or profession: “we-ness.” Members of such a group show some core characteristics or markers, such as a certain behavior or appearance, or simply the quality of being the same. And this awareness of collective similarity of course goes along with that of distinction (McCoskey 2002; Hodos 2010; Vandorpe 2012). In this chapter, collective “social” identity is dealt with; this is closely intertwined with the “ethnic” identity discussed in the following two chapters.

18.2 Social Identity and Upward Mobility Under the Ptolemies

The conquests of Alexander the Great and the numerous wars of his successors effected a high mobility in the whole Aegean region, and even beyond. Far from their home, many people sought their fortune in the armies and the administration of the Hellenistic kings, inter alia because for most, such service implied social advancement (Launey 1949–1950).

In Ptolemaic Egypt, the kings faced multiple ethnic groups as subjects within their empire: the indigenous Egyptian population on the one hand, and the Greco-Macedonian

immigrants, who belonged to a large set of different cultural areas, on the other (see Chapter 19). At least in the third century BC, a person's social status was linked mostly to his origin or ethnic status and his profession. With few exceptions, the first Ptolemaic kings filled both the higher levels within the civil administration and the more important part of the army mainly with Greco-Macedonian immigrants and their descendants. Furthermore, these people belonged to a privileged group that was freed from the so-called *obol* tax, to which all male inhabitants were liable. In the tax registers, these privileged tax payers were called "Hellenes," but we can see that this description was not always ethnically straightforward (Clarysse and Thompson 2006, 2, pp. 124–157; see Chapter 19). Thus, at first, the non-Egyptian immigrants were the better-off inhabitants of the empire, while the indigenous Egyptians held offices on the lower levels, if at all.

Over the years, however, the link between origin and social status softened, and more and more Egyptians entered the Greek sectors and their higher echelons. Those working in a profession that was felt to be Greek came to belong to the class of "Hellenes," even though they stayed ethnically and culturally Egyptian. To emphasize their new status, they assumed a Greek name and a fictitious Greek ethnic (Clarysse 1985, p. 64; Clarysse and Thompson 2006, 2, pp. 144–145) – as in the case of Maron son of Dionysios. As a policeman (*phylakites*), Maron belonged to the cleruchy and thus bore a double name: Maron alias Nektsaphthis, son of Dionysios alias Petosiris. After he was promoted into the *katoikia* (the cavalry), he divested himself of his Egyptian names and used the purely fictitious ethnic "Macedonian": he was now called "Maron, son of Dionysios, Macedonian" (Harrauer 1987, p. 45; Scheuble-Reiter 2012, pp. 112–113; see also Chapter 19 on changing ethnicity).

Although most indigenes probably remained true to their Egyptian culture, they surely had to learn the Greek language, at least on a certain scale. So, a Greek name and ethnic and the ability to write the Greek language do not tell us much about a person's ethnic or cultural self-image or identity. The same is true of those speaking a Greek dialect (Clarysse 1998). These things mainly served as a social marker: the simple change of a name was an adequate medium of symbolic communication to visualize the social identity of its bearer.

Local women could gain social promotion by marrying a Greek. Their sons adopted the father's Greek status and could assume their father's position in the army, and thus as owner of land. For a long time, such mixed marriages were considered a phenomenon of the second and first centuries BC and of the lower echelons of society (Peremans 1981), but we now know several examples of such mixed families from the third century BC, belonging to the higher classes (e.g. P.Count 4; Clarysse 1992). The grandson of the immigrant Macedonian Stratippos, for instance, probably married an Egyptian woman named Haynchis, and they called their son by the double name Onnophris alias Neoptolemos (P.Freib. IV Add. 1; Clarysse 1988a, 1992, pp. 52–53; this family is further discussed in Chapter 19). Another well-known vivid example is that of Apollonia alias Senmonthis, the Egyptian wife of the Cretan cavalry officer Dryton son of Pamphilos, who lived in Pathyris in Upper Egypt. After her marriage, we can see Apollonia acting as an active businesswoman in Pathyris and granting several loans. It is interesting to note that when acting as a businesswoman and representing herself to society, she called herself a Greek (*Wynn*) or "Cyrenaean" woman and used her Greek name. But in non-official documents, she always made use of her Egyptian name, Senmonthis. Thus, for her family

and friends she was Egyptian, but for society in general (and for her business partners in particular) she was Greek; that is, a member of the highest social class (Vandorpe 2002b; this family is further discussed in Chapter 25).

Thus, social identities in Ptolemaic Egypt included ethnic, cultural, religious, and professional identities, which could be partially identical, partially different, or even opposed. At the same time, people could belong to different collectivities and assume many different collective and/or individual identities. Ethnic and social identity in particular can hardly be separated, because the former is a “specific form of social identity that relates to self-conscious identification with a particular sociocultural group” (Hodos 2010, p. 4).

18.3 Elite Classes of Ptolemaic Society

We possess far more papyrological and epigraphical sources for members of the elite classes than for the lower echelons of society. Archives are particularly enlightening, because they can provide an insight into a wide swath of daily life. The biggest and most famous archive of Ptolemaic Egypt is the Zenon archive, which consists of about 2000 papyri dating to the years 270–240 BC; thus, almost every third Ptolemaic papyrus is part of it. Zenon, the office-holder, came from Kaunos, a Carian city in Asia Minor. In the late 260s and early 250s, he worked first as a private agent for the “minister of finances” (*dioiketes*) Apollonios, coordinating his private commercial activities. For this purpose, he traveled several times to Coele-Syria, and used the opportunity to conduct his own business there, especially in the profitable slave trade. Some years later, in 256 BC, Zenon was appointed to manage Apollonios’ domain (*dorea*) of 10 000 arouras (about 2750 ha) in the north-east of the Arsinoite nome, which Ptolemy II had bestowed on the *dioiketes*. This domain consisted for the most part of newly gained land, which had to be brought under cultivation. Zenon held this office for eight years, and settled in the village of Philadelphieia, the center of Apollonios’ domain. Here, his private deals increased over the years. Alongside his activities in the slave trade with Syria, he invested in tax farming, in winegrowing, and in the breeding of small animals such as goats, sheep, and pigs. He possessed draft and pack animals, which he let to the local farmers, and he owned several bath houses, which he rented out. Finally, he leased more than 1000 ha of land from soldiers and sublet it to Egyptian farmers. Over the years, Zenon thus established a huge social and economic network (Clarysse and Vandorpe 1995; see also Chapter 17).

Besides these self-made-millionaires, wealth and status in Ptolemaic Egypt were – as in all ancient societies – based mainly on landownership and/or office-holding (Manning 2003a). Thus, on the one hand, there were the priests of the influential Egyptian temples, with their large areas of temple land and long-established Egyptian families, mainly in Upper Egypt (Blasius 2011); on the other, there were the soldiers and officials allotted by the Ptolemaic kings land in the Egyptian *chora*, particularly the Fayum. The best known group of the latter is the cleruchs, soldiers who obtained a plot of land according to their military; cavalrymen (*katoikoi* or *katoikoi hippeis*) received the largest, at 27–28 ha. An interesting insight into the households of these cavalrymen is offered by an Arsinoite salt-tax register from 229 BC (P.Count 2, col. xii–xv), in which family members, slaves, the household staff, and the livestock are all listed under the head of the family. First, we can

see that the land and the income from it were the main economic basis for the *katoikoi*, because the size of their land plot and that of their flock correlate; the livestock of other cleruchs is considerably smaller. Second, the cavalrymen bred livestock, not for their own needs, but for the sake of commerce: with two exceptions, all *katoikoi* in P.Count 2 possess more than 100 sheep. Third, their households, with an average size of 6.2 persons, including slaves and staff (see later), are the largest in the register, demonstrating their social status (Thompson 2002, pp. 143–144).

Similar insights into the possessions of officers and their soldiers come from the Petrie wills (P.Petr.² I). The Lycian Peisias, “one of those, who are attributed to Leontiskos, ... cleruch, belonging to those who are allotted land in the Arsinoite nome,” makes the following provisions:

But if I suffer the mortal fate, I bequeath my possessions in Alexandria to Pisikrates, my son from Niko: a tenement house and all the furniture belonging to me there and my Syrian slaves Dionysios and Eutychos and my female slave Abisila and her daughter Eirene, both of them from Syria. To Axiothea, daughter of Hippas, from Lycia, my wife, (I bequeath) a Syrian slave-girl Libyseion and the house belonging to me in the village of Boubastos in the Arsinoite nome. The remaining furniture in Boubastos (I bequeath) jointly to Pisikrates and Axiothea ... All things which Axiothea brought with her as a dowry and which are still intact, she may keep. (P.Petr.² I 13.5–15, translation Clarysse 1991a, p. 155)

A detailed list of the elements of the dowry and its value in cash follow the provision. The total value – which is probably not complete, because the papyrus breaks off – amounts to 230 drachmas. This was a considerable amount, and reflects the family’s wealthy status. Peisias and his family obviously lived in the Fayum village of Boubastos, where he owned another house, which he bequeathed to his wife Axiothea. He also possessed a tenement house in Alexandria, a predecessor of the present-day apartment block, whose ownership is often cited as characteristic of the very rich (e.g. Plutarch, *Alexander* 15; Athenaeus 12.542–543). Finally, he passed on at least five slaves, a number that is again a sign of his social standing (Clarysse 1991a, pp. 158–162).

So, the number of slaves in a household was another important indicator of wealth and status. The previously mentioned third-century census lists show that an average family held just one or two slaves (e.g. P.Count 2, 46, and 47), and thus those with four, five, or even more must have been really well off. Moreover, these registers attest numerous further household dependents, including nurses, shepherds, and farmers, which again shows the family’s economic strength (Clarysse and Thompson 2006; Thompson 2011a, pp. 202–203).

On the whole, slaveholding and non-kin dependence were features of the immigrant population; in Egyptian communities they do not play a major role. It is interesting to see that the few Egyptian slave-owners belonged to the urban professional elite, which not only identified them with the Greek immigrants, but also marked them as “going Greek” (Clarysse and Thompson 2006, 2, pp. 264–265; Thompson 2011a, pp. 208–209).

An exceptionally vivid example of the two faces of Ptolemaic Egypt – and their social implications – comes from Edfu, where the members of a leading family are represented in Greek and Egyptian tombstones, as shown by Yoyotte (1969). The Greek-styled tombstones bear Greek diptychs by a poet called Herodes (I.Métriques 5, 6, 7, and 35); those mentioned all have Greek names such as Apollonios son of Ptolemaios, were high officers

in the army, and were participants in the military campaigns of the Ptolemaic kings – one even bears the court title “relative of the king” (*syngenes*). The Egyptian tombstones, in contrast, are Hieroglyphic stelae in the traditional Egyptian style (Milne, Cairo Catalogue Général inv. 22018, 22021, 22050). Here, the family members have Egyptian names (with one exception) and serve as priests in the temples of Edfu – but they too were generals and cavalry officers, participants in battle and “brothers of the king” (*sn-nswt*), who were granted large plots of land (P.Haun. IV 70). Thus, these noblemen from Edfu obviously acted as Greeks in a Greek environment (e.g. the upper echelons of the military) and as Egyptians in an Egyptian one (e.g. as priests of the local temples) (Clarysse 1985, pp. 62–64, 1989, pp. 84–87; Moyer 2011a).

18.4 Lower Classes of Ptolemaic Society

Although we have many sources, only a few inform us on the social conditions of the lower classes. We know of laborers and employees in agriculture, as well as in trade and crafts, and of officials in the lower echelons of the administration and the military. The social conditions of these people are as manifold as their professions (Rathbone 1989, pp. 164–166). As today, there were uneducated day laborers and skilled craftsmen, who could be self-employed, salaried, or employed at the state monopolies. Most craftsmen in the papyri are probably small businessmen who owned their own workshop or worked for a salary in family businesses. Despite their social differences, certain groups of professions – mainly craftsmen and traders – were organized in associations, and thus had some corporate feeling. Some streets in Alexandria and the *metropoleis* were named after these professions, probably because this is where they were originally based (Reil 1913, pp. 93–122; San Nicolò 1972, 1, pp. 66–206).

The socioeconomic status of several sections of the population is often underestimated, especially because of their Egyptian background. One of these groups is the royal peasants (*basilikoi georgoi*) who worked on crown land. While earlier scholarship, following a thesis proposed by Rostovtzeff (1941, pp. 277–280), tended to consider this a closed social group of non-slave dependents – a poor section of the population that was exploited by the Ptolemaic state – more recent research contradicts this idea (Shelton 1976; Rowlandson 1985; Monson 2012a, pp. 12–22). The royal peasants were in no way bound to their plots by means of long-term or even unlimited contracts. Their rent – up to half the crops of their plots – was geared to the actual productivity of their allotment. They could even sublease (e.g. P.Tebt. I 42) and cede their plots (e.g. P.Agr. I, col. iv–vii; P.Iand. VII 134), or cultivate other categories of land. At the end of the second century BC, crown farmers enjoyed certain privileges and further legal rights: they were protected from seizure of the best land by officials (P.Sorb. I 51), and in the case of debt to the crown, they could not be sold into slavery (P.Teb. I 5). In addition, priests and soldiers were crown tenants, too (BGU XIV 2372); thus, *basilikoi georgoi* were far from constituting a social class or a closed group.

Another example is the lower ranks of the army, such as the Egyptian *machimoi* (see Chapter 11), who received plots of 5, 7, 10, or even 20 arouras. Their comparatively small plots, their mainly Egyptian ethnicity, and a very few mentions of desertion were traditionally seen as valid arguments for their low socioeconomic status. But an unprejudiced

revision of the available material has shown that they were probably better off than an average farmer, and that while they belonged to the lower strata of the military, this did not hold for the general population (Fischer-Bovet 2013, pp. 225–227).

Even if we know a laborer's salary, we can scarcely draw conclusions about his social standing. First, we often have no information about his family, the work of other family members, or the size of his household. Second, we always have to take into account that he could have had other sources of income, for example from agriculture: he might have possessed or leased a plot of land that he cultivated, or he could have worked as a seasonal harvest laborer (cf. Dross-Krüpe 2011, pp. 230–232 for weavers in Roman Egypt).

18.5 Chattel and Sacred Slavery Under the Ptolemies

The Greek system of chattel slavery as a widespread institution first followed Alexander's conquest of Egypt. Previously, it was only found in the Greek communities of Naucratis and Memphis (Athenaeus 4.149f and 596b–c; Herodotus 2.154, 3–4). Although pre-Ptolemaic Egypt knew various states of dependence, such as self-sales to temples and debt-slavery (which continued to exist in later times; Vittmann 2006), chattel slavery was Greek and was brought to Egypt by the Greek immigrants (Clarysse and Thompson 2006, 2, pp. 262–263; Thompson 2011a, pp. 194–195).

In Ptolemaic Egypt, slaves were regularly called *pais* (“boy”) and *paidiske* (“girl”) in Greek, and correspondingly *hl* and *hlt* in Demotic (Scholl 1983, pp. 7–9; Clarysse and Thompson 2006, 2, p. 262; Thompson 2011a, pp. 202–203). But apart from the terminology, there are no noteworthy differences between the slavery system in Ptolemaic Egypt and that in Greece (Biežuńska-Małowist 1974). As valuable objects, slaves were bought and sold, were bequeathed or freed in wills, and ran away from their owners. Like free adults, they were registered and subject to taxation, such as the salt tax (P.Count 2, 46, and 47; cf. Clarysse and Thompson 2006, 2, pp. 22, 263, n.111). There even existed legal provisions on slaves (C.Ptol.Sklav. 1–12; cf. Pavlovskaja 1972, pp. 177–227).

Regular sources of slaves included the numerous wars with other Hellenistic kings and an intensive slave trade. Syria and the African regions beyond Egypt's southern borders seem to have been the most important suppliers. But Egyptians were also enslaved during times of unrest (P.Sijp. 45 = C.Ptol.Sklav. I 9 = SB XX 14659). In addition, there were home-bred slaves, in some cases even children of slave-owners and bondswomen (Scholl 1990, pp. 117–145; Clarysse and Thompson 2006, 2, p. 263; Thompson 2011a, pp. 206–207). In the third-century BC Petrie wills, in which slaves were often set free at the death of the testator or the heir, some slaves are explicitly recognized as offspring of their mother's owner: the 65-year-old cleruch Dion of Herakleia, of the company of Damon, commander of 500 men, disposed in 238/7 BC that “Melainis [and] her [son] Ammonios, whose father I am, and whom I reared, I set free, if they stay with me as long as I live as faithful servants” (P.Petr.² I 3.19–23).

About two-thirds of all Ptolemaic papyri that mention slaves belong to the previously mentioned Zenon archive (Scholl 1983). Thus, most of our information on the education of slaves, their daily supply, their use, and their sale, as well as on runaway slaves, comes from this archive (Pavlovskaja 1972, pp. 228–261; Bagnall 2011, pp. 55–60). While Zenon's slaves were a kind of elite, those mentioned in other Ptolemaic texts are mostly

cheaper household slaves (on slaveholding in families, see also Chapter 21). In trade and industry, few slaves were deployed. The only exception is the workshops of the textile industry, which were completely managed by unfree people. For a long time, modern scholars acted on the assumption that in Ptolemaic Egypt, slaves were irrelevant in the domains of agriculture and army. But the documents of these sectors simply do not allow an estimate of the number of slaves deployed, especially compared to free laborers. Furthermore, slaves belonging to big households, especially of land-owning soldiers, surely served as grooms or military support personnel and helped cultivate the family plot (Scholl 1990, pp. 1022–1023). In a list of cavalrymen and their *paidēs* (SB XVI 12221.1–5 = C.Ptol.Sklav. I 86), the horseman Satokos son of Atokos, for instance, is accompanied by three slaves, only one of them explicitly distinguished as a groom (Heinen 1983a).

The social status of a slave and his or her standard of living depended on the owner's social status and his or her operating conditions. Normally, the slave-owner was not only liable for the slave's taxes, but also had to pay for their alimentation in terms of wheat (*sitometria*) and their clothing (*himatismos*). A slave's clothing in particular could provide an indication of his or her owner's wealth (Scholl 1990, p. 605). In addition, slaves like those in the Zenon archive could also receive a salary in cash (*opsonion*). According to one of Zenon's calculations, his slaves cost more than day laborers and monthly paid workmen (P.Col.Zen. 75 = C.Ptol.Sklav. I 105): in contrast to the unskilled laborers, Zenon's elite slaves had obtained special training and could independently process transactions (Scholl 1990, pp. 512–514).

Besides chattel slavery, various forms of sacred slaves existed, whose definition and relation to others are not yet resolved. We know for sure that such sacred slaves were not dependent, but only attached to a temple in some way. One group was the *hierodouloi* or “temple-slaves,” which are already known from Classical Greece and continued to exist across the whole Aegean region (Thompson 2011a, pp. 200–202); these were common and free people working in agriculture, trade, and crafts, so despite their description as *hierodouloi*, their main duty cannot have been service in the temple (Otto 1949; Scholl 1985, 2009; Thompson 2011a, pp. 200–201). Another form was the *katoche*, attested in the Memphite Serapeum (see Chapter 30 on the *katochoi* archive): here, people called *katochoi* or “recluses” dedicated themselves as servants to the temple in order to enjoy its protection and to have their living there (Delekat 1964; Legras 2011; Thompson 2011a, p. 201). Yet another Egyptian form of sacred slavery was self-dedication to a god, in which a regular payment was made. The previously mentioned Onnophris alias Neoptolemos, for instance, dedicated himself to the jackal-god Anubis for 2½ kite (or 5 drachmas) every month in order that “no daemon, [monster (?) ---], spirit, evil force (?), no man who is in the underworld, no man on earth will have power” over him (P.Freib. IV Add. 1; cf. Clarysse 1988a, 1992, p. 53).

18.6 Social Classes in Roman and Late Antique Egypt

The provincialization of Egypt was characterized by important decisions that led to an administrative reorganization of the state and bore political and social consequences of great impact. Augustus himself interdicted access to the province for senators and illustrious equestrians who were not granted special permission (Tacitus, *Annales* 2.59). Cassius

Dio (51.17) tells us that Egyptians were banned from the Roman Senate: only two families were risen to the *latus clavus*, that of T. Julius Alexander Julianus (second century AD), grandson or great-grandson of the prefect Tiberius Julius Alexander, and that of P. Aelius Coeranus, in the third century AD. In both cases, they were descendants of the cosmopolitan Alexandrian elite.

Moreover, the prefect of Egypt, as well as the highest officials of the provincial administrative structure (*dioiketes*, *idios logos*, chief priest or *archiereus*, *iuridicus*, financial procurators, military commanders, and the four *epistrategoi*; see Chapter 8), were selected from among Roman citizens of equestrian rank. As the Roman presence in Egypt had always been very limited, and the migration of Roman citizens to Egypt never reached the extent of that in the Hellenistic Period, the so-called “Greco-Egyptian” population (Greeks and Hellenized Egyptians), which had previously constituted the elite under the Ptolemaic kingdom, acquired only subordinate roles, confined to the nome, district, and village level (*strategos*, royal scribe, *oikonomos*, district scribe, village scribe). The Egyptian population remained confined to the dimension of the village and subjected to various liturgies (compulsory public services) (Bowman 1986, 1971; Oertel 1965).

The Romans granted the status of Greek *poleis* only to Alexandria, Naucratis, and Ptolemais, and later Antinoopolis – the new city founded by Hadrian in AD 130. Those who held citizenship (*politeia*) of these cities, as well as the *cives Romani* living in Egypt, did not pay the poll tax or *laographia*. Alexandrian citizenship, moreover, was a requirement in order to obtain the *civitas romana*, except for soldiers discharged with *honesta missio* (Delia 1991).

The inhabitants of the remaining part of the country, the *chora*, were considered “Egyptians” (*Aigyptioi*) by Roman law, even if they were of Greek descent or were Hellenized. But within the administrative seats of Egypt’s nomes (*nomoi*), called *metropoleis*, the Romans identified some privileged groups to whom they would grant partial exemption from the poll tax (*laographia*). Admission to these groups was strictly regulated. The members were the so-called “metropolites” (*apo metropoleos*), the gymnasial class (*apo gymnasion*) – a kind of elite within the metropolite elite, the Arsinoite elite (called the 6475 *katoikoi* or “6475 cavalymen”), and some categories of Egyptian cult priests. This privilege was passed on to the new generations along both the maternal and the paternal line; for this purpose, a specific judgment procedure called *epikrasis* or scrutiny was established (Bussi 2008). The need to maintain a family’s social status is probably one of the reasons why such a high number of inbred marriages between brothers and sisters is reported: between 15 and 20% of the households known between the first and the third centuries AD (on brother–sister marriages, see Chapter 21; on the metropolite and gymnasial class, see Chapter 19).

In provincial society, the elite groups were distinguished more by hierarchical superiority than by prosperity: suffice it to quote a census return (P.Oxy. VI 984) dated to AD 91/2 and coming from Upper Egypt (Ptolemais Hermiou or Lykopolis), which involves 63 nuclear families, 12 of which are composed of *apo gymnasion*, the gymnasial elite at the peak of the social pyramid. Where practiced professions are specified, we find an oilmaker, a donkey driver, a farmer, and a soil measurer; their possessions are very meager, often they do not own the house they live in, and in three cases they dwell in a kind of stable (*mandra*). It is clear that Egypt presents local and regional differentiated situations, but it

is significant that the way in which the elites built their social status always remains the same. By observing such dynamics, it is possible to recognize the structure of the social pyramid within the province.

Another restriction imposed by the Romans was the obstinate refusal on the part of the emperors to grant to the city of Alexandria a *boule*, or city council (PSI X 1160; P.Lond. VI 1912). With the exception of Antinoopolis, which seems to have been given one on its foundation (SB V 7603), the other cities – *poleis* and *metropoleis* – had to wait until AD 200/1, when they were granted one by Septimius Severus (Cassius Dio 51.17.2-3; Historia Augusta, *Septimius Severus* XVII 2). By that time, however, the *boule* had lost its political value and was more connected to the fiscal system and the liturgies, divided between the bouletic and non-bouletic class (see later).

An important moment of transition occurred in AD 212, when the *Constitutio Antoniniana* granted Roman citizenship to almost all the (free) people living in the empire. This produced some gradual changes in provincial society: for example, every Greek or Egyptian assumed a Roman *nomen*, Aurelius, and became subject to Roman law; the practice of inbreeding, earlier tolerated by the Romans, was now forbidden. However, the last declaration of *epikrisis* – necessary to identify Greek elite members – dates to AD 295 (P.Oxy. XLIII 3137), more than 80 years after the *Constitutio Antoniniana*: this shows that the change in determination of the elite was not a sudden, but a slow and gradual process.

With the previously mentioned establishment of city councils or *boulai* in the *poleis* and *metropoleis*, a new elite group, replacing the metropolite and gymnasial orders, was born: the bouletic class, selected on the basis of wealth, and no longer of descent. The councilors or bouleuts, who were required to hold residence in their (*metro*)polis, acted as benefactors for the city and took up costly magistracies and the heavier liturgies. Although membership was not hereditary, wealthy outsiders had limited access. With the reforms by Diocletian, when new offices were created in view of new fiscal demands (see Chapter 8), the councilors lost part of their income, and their number decreased. By the early fifth century, they were replaced by an even smaller group of major landowners (*geouchoi* or *possessores*), who dominated simultaneously the political, the administrative, and the ecclesiastical landscape. The Apiones from Oxyrhynchos, for instance, who held Egypt's largest estates, entered the imperial bureaucracy and the "created" senate in Constantinople, but they also supported churches. But in order to have competed with the super-rich families based in the heartland of the old Roman Empire, the Apiones would have needed significantly more wealth than their estate at Oxyrhynchos could possibly have generated (Hickey 2012, p. 155; on the status marker "Flavius," see Chapter 25).

18.7 Upward Mobility in a Changing Roman Setting

Upward mobility was significantly more difficult than downward in Roman Egypt. In order to highlight the tools the population had at its disposal to effect this, we will focus on the period before AD 212.

The army was in theory the privileged vehicle of social upgrade and Romanization within the empire (Alföldi et al. 2000); indeed, there are many examples of non-citizen

country-dwellers who obtained citizenship on enlisting in the legions (Lesquier 1918; Alston 1995). If we examine data on enlistment in Egypt, we observe that, under Augustus, 25% of all soldiers were Egyptian, while the majority were of oriental or micro-Asian origin; during the second century, we see a significant increase in natives, reaching 77.5% by century's end (Le Bohec 2003; see also Chapter 11). Also relevant is the presence of soldiers declaring an *origo ex castris*: these are the illegitimate sons of legionaries and auxiliaries, born during their father's service. Since they were born "in the encampment," they were enlisted, and in this way obtained Roman citizenship at the end of their service.

Three private letters may explain how the Egyptian mentality concerning military service evolved through the years. The first, dating to the first century AD (BGU IV 1097), contains a mother's complaint against her husband, who convinced their son to enroll; the second, from the second century (SB IV 7354), relates a father's regret about his son's refusal to join the navy; while the third, from the third century (BGU VII 1680), demonstrates how militancy became a very common and thus well-received choice, as "everyone enrolls in the army."

That being said, what opportunities of career and social promotion did military service guarantee in Egypt? The case of L. Bellicenus Gemellus, whose documents date between AD 94 and 110, shows an almost certainly Egyptian soldier who dedicates himself full-time to the management of his properties after being discharged. Among these, we find orchards, cereal fields, and olive groves; he is also involved in pig-breeding. His land is formed of different parcels, scattered in various villages, the administrative center of which is located in the Fayum village of Euhemeria. Furthermore, he benefits from the help of an administrator, named Epagathos, probably a slave. Gemellus adopts some Roman habits: he sacrifices pigs for the celebration of the birthday of his son Sabinus, and he celebrates the *Saturnalia*, as he writes in a letter (Hohlwein 1957). In two other letters, he mentions in-kind donations to the authorities, particularly the *strategoi* – a sign that he filled a high-rank position in the local society, which allowed him some personal privileges. A similar case is that of Gaius Julius Apollinarius, from a metropolitan family, whose properties are in Karanis (Fayum). His father is a legionary (so he was already a *civis*, or became one through his enlistment), and rises to the status of *signifer* ("standard bearer," P.Mich. VIII 485, second century AD). Apollinarius begins as a *principalis* (a term for a low-ranking officer), which allows him to avoid heavier duties; he is then promoted *librarius legionis*; and finally, in AD 119, he becomes a *frumentarius* in Rome, from where he manages the family business. After being discharged, we find him in Karanis (P.Mich. VIII 498). His metropolitan origin and the support of some influential Romans grant him a brilliant career – but not one outside the provincial boundary. Claudius Terentianus (P.Mich. VIIIb 467–481) has a similar trajectory. He is the son of Ptolemaeus, but addresses the *civis Romanus* Claudius Tiberius as a father, too. Thanks to the latter's support and, perhaps, adoption, Terentianus obtains enlistment in the navy and, later, the legion.

If the fate of the most illustrious veterans of Egypt is restricted to the province (and often in the Fayum area), let us try to understand their situation, and that of their descendants. The *Gnomon of the Idios Logos*, a set of Roman rules applied to all of Egypt, stated that if an Egyptian enrolled by deception, he would return to be a *peregrinus* (BGU V 1210, Section 55). Moreover (Section 53), the extension of the *civitas* to Egyptian wives

married after their husband's discharge was forbidden. Veterans could leave a Latin or Greek will (Section 34). Romans bequeath their goods to Romans, and Egyptians to Egyptians; hence, a legitimate child, whose father was a veteran and whose mother was Egyptian, could inherit *civitas* and goods only from his father. If the veteran did not obtain the *honesta missio*, the *civitas* could not be passed on to his legitimate child. Therefore, many restrictions existed.

An important concession was the status of *Antinoeus*, documented from AD 148. This involved epigamy (the extension of the *civitas* to one's legitimate Egyptian wife), exemption from *laographia* and from the tax on commercial transactions, the limitation of liturgies to the territory of Antinoopolis, and the right to resort to the city's tribunal (Schubert 1990). An example of a veteran with this status is Valerius Titanianos, a Greek of Egypt, landowner in the Fayum region, member of the Alexandrian Museion in AD 198, *civis*, soldier in Asia Minor in the Caracalla's army, and *praefectus vigilum* in AD 217.

Several veterans had public *honores* of a liturgical nature in the third century. For example, Marcus Aurelius Corellius Alexander was a gymnasiarch, councilor, *neokoros* ("warden") of Sarapis, and *enarchos prytanis* ("the president in office"); all these positions imply considerable possessions. But this does not hold for many other veterans, or their descendants. For example, Marcus Julius Cesianus (P.Phil. 14), a veteran with a flourishing economical situation, had a grandson of the same name, who, at the beginning of the third century AD, was compelled to hand over, to sell, or to lose one by one his lands, because they were a guarantee of debts that were never paid. Often, those who bought these lands were women; frequently, Alexandrian women. One case is that of the Egyptian Ammonarion, later wife of the Antinoite M. Lucretius Diogenes. In general, we note that veterans, through time, could not compete with the rich landowners living in the *metropoleis* or in Alexandria, whose possessions continued to increase as the veterans' diminished (Schubert 2007; Waebens in Vandorpe et al. 2015, pp. 239–251).

Indeed, the second century AD is characterized by great transformations in the Egyptian elite economy: metropolitans and Alexandrians invested their capital by means of loans, often with mortgage, and obtained property from insolvent debtors. They also invested directly by purchasing real estate, increasing their holdings to a great extent. Sources tell us that some people were able to collect great amounts of land through more or less legal means. For example, Sarapamon son of Paniskos (P.Amh. II 79, AD 186–189), starting with a meager property of 7 arouras, was accused of having reached through fiscal fraud an extraordinary 7000 arouras, plus 200 arouras of vineyard, and of being able to grant a loan of 72 talents at one time. Meanwhile, more and more veterans and their families became part of the ordinary Egyptian population.

Matrimonial strategies could sometimes help a veteran's family. Such is the case with Lucretia Octavia, sister of M. Lucretius Diogenes (Chapter 13), who married two men within the same Antinoopolitan milieu. Her brother, meanwhile, married a woman called Ammonarion, an Egyptian, wealthy but not belonging to a privileged group, and later, Isidora, metropolitan and wealthy, but not a Roman citizen. The male line of the family became extinct; the last representative that appears in the documents is Diogenes and Isidora's daughter Kopria. It becomes clear that the old metropolitan urban elite held the highest positions at the end of the second century AD, while veterans who had reached the rank of metropolitan or Alexandrian become very uncommon.

Real property, as always in the ancient world, constituted the economic basis of the Egyptian social pyramid during the four centuries of imperial dominion. This property, both public and private – including that originating in the first-century *ousiai* (Parássoglou 1978; Rowlandson 1996) – was divided into parcels of various dimensions, which came to be concentrated in the hands of an increasingly small group of landowners. The model of land utilization is similar regardless of its size. For example, the small landowner Epimachos (first century AD) entrusted the management of his roughly 50 *arouras* to one Didymos, who availed himself of a few permanent workers, supported by seasonal ones; Sarapion, proprietor in the Hermopolite nome (second century AD), rented small parcels of land in order to sublet them, and also benefited from breeding; Laches, owner of about 500 *arouras* (P.Mil.Vogl. VII: 19–27) scattered across 11 villages and divided into parcels consisting of 1–38 *arouras*, left their management to agents or *phrontistai*. The social order is the same in each case: the landowner dwells in the *metropolis* and avails himself of agents, who manage the lots as substantially independent productive units; these agents work the lots with minimum expenditure, always to the benefit of the owner, who gains the wealth required to reach the level of metropolitan or (from the third century AD) bouletic elite. In the second century, we find below these elites a group of small landowners, such as the family of Kronion (Foraboschi 1971); their properties are so small that they are obliged either to become tenant farmers or to incur debts, sometimes with dramatic effects (Tacoma 2006).

In the third century, the phenomenon becomes even more extreme (Bagnall 1992; Mazza 2002): the *eques* Aurelius Appianus, a person of great importance within the Alexandrine and bouletic elite, owns several units or *phrontides* in about 30 villages in the Arsinoite nome, some 20 of which are managed by one Heroninos (see Chapter 17). The lands belonging to Appianus' son-in-law merge with his holdings when his daughter inherits at least part of her father's estate. The structure becomes more complex: Alypius is the general administrator of the land located in the Arsinoite nome; the other administrators, subordinated to him, are selected from among the local landowners of the nome, helped by some salaried assistants. Below them are the *phrontistai*, who administer single rural units and are apparently recruited from among the village population (Rathbone 1991). The labor is divided among permanent employees, probably free (*oiketai*) and on contract (*metrematiai*). The presence of slaves is attested, but they do not seem to be employed in agricultural work (e.g. the *oikonomos* Herakleides owns some). In some areas, taxes paid by *metrematiai* are collected in private form and paid by the estate, foreshadowing what will happen during the fifth century in Apion's estate. The difference is that here, this is the exception, but later it will be the norm (Ruffini 2008). On the other side, the social structure during the Byzantine Period appears to be strongly polarized: the elites revolve around the urban milieu (Alston 2002), and the great estates are vertically bound to the center (e.g. in Oxyrhynchos), while the villages are horizontally connected to one another (e.g. Aphroditopolis).

In most cases, the Egyptian elites are characterized by a considerable discontinuity over the first to the fourth centuries, due to their inability to maintain their high economic and status positions across the generations; renewal dominates, even in the most successful cases.

In addition to military service and property, there are other sectors of the Egyptian economy that allowed a certain possibility of social mobility. Craft production was one; but note the small silver statue produced in Tebtynis during the second century, which sold for 920 drachmas, of which only 60 went to the craftsman (P.Mil.Vogl. II 102). Another is textile production. We are quite well informed on this. The textile trade required only a limited initial investment (the loom could be located in the house, or even in the courtyard, and did not need much space), and could provide employment to the family for generations. Apprenticeship contracts tell us how common it was for a weaver to send his son (or slave, or daughter; Migliardi Zingale 2007) to a colleague to complete his training (Wipszycka 1965; Dross-Krüpe 2011). Although the economic condition of the weaver appears in general to be very modest, there are cases where they could grow quite rich. For example, the presence of a “controller of weavers” (*histon-arches*) indicates that an atelier has considerable manpower (P.Giss. I 12, AD 113–120), as does the presence of several apprentices at once. When we learn that eight merchants in Oxyrhynchos provided the army with 200 blankets, we have to consider that they had several production ateliers each (P.Oxy. XIX 2230). It is clear that market demand was high (van Minnen 1986).

P.Bremen 63 (AD 116), a letter from Eudaimonis to her daughter-in-law Aline, relates how she works with the help of female slaves (*paidiskai*) and informs us of the difficulties involved in finding workers, because her freelance employees had taken to the streets to demand a pay rise (common behavior in Egypt since the first strike of craftsmen in Deir el-Medina in the New Kingdom). This document also confirms the use of male and female workers, both free persons and slaves, in the bigger private ateliers. Meanwhile, census receipts show both “weaver” (*gerdioi*) slaves (P.Brux. I 19, 117/18 AD) and weavers of the metropolitan class (*apo tes metropoleos*), among whom we find an interesting case: a man (BGU I 115, col. i, AD 189), married to his sister, whose son, married to a metropolitan woman, is a goldsmith. Therefore, the social status of a craftsman did not depend on his or her profession: the professional groups were not socially homogeneous, and their economic condition varied substantially. They benefited from privileges and liturgical exemptions (P.Phil. 1, AD 119), but they paid professional and personal taxes, as attested by the archive of the weaver Tryphon, perhaps a metropolitan from Oxyrhynchos (Biscottini 1966; see Chapters 13 and 17).

It is very difficult to evaluate the possibility of economic and social upward mobility in the Egyptian population by means of other economic activities. Certainly, trade developed extensively in the Roman Period, reaching as far as East Asia, and offering an opportunity of enrichment to certain enterprising inhabitants of the province. It is enough to quote the case of Nikanor (first century AD) and his “transport business” of goods of various kinds between the Nile Valley (Koptos) and the Red Sea harbors of Berenike and Myos Hormos. By means of this activity, he and his family came in business contact with a number of rich and important people, many of whom were Roman citizens. There is little we can tell about his family’s economic situation, but it would certainly have been quite prosperous (Fuks 1951; Ruffing 1993; for Greek education, which could play a major role in upward mobility in Late Antique Egypt, see Chapters 19 and 24).

18.8 Slaves, Freedmen, and a Dynamic Upward Mobility

In addition to free workers, we often find slaves engaged in craft work, in education (e.g. apprentice stenographer; P.Oxy. IV 724, AD 155), and in activities that concern the household (especially in Alexandria, but also in *metropoleis* and villages), where they have different tasks depending on the extent to which the house owner trusts them. In the third and fourth centuries, specialized slaves became indispensable among the elite to the management of their businesses and estates.

Slaves are also found in an agricultural context, although not in such large numbers (Biezuńska-Małowist 1977; Straus 2004). Sometimes, they were the tenants of cultivable aouras, such as the slave belonging to a gymnasial elite member (*apo gymnasiou*) mentioned in P.Grenf. I 47 (AD 148). They could reach a relevant number within a family, as is evident from documents concerning divisions of inheritance (P.Mich. V 326, AD 48). They are registered in *epikrisis* (“scrutiny”) documents according to the status of their owner: *dodekadrachmoi*, *apolusimoi*, or *apo tes metropoleos*. So too are freedmen (e.g. PSI X 1146, AD 138; PSI XII 1230, AD 203); within the society of *peregrini* that characterized the period before AD 212, freedmen obtained the same status as their former owner (P.Oxy. III 478; SB XIV 11388; P.Oxy. I 5 descr., all belonging to the second century). They benefited from an extraordinary social mobility, which allowed their children to reach, by means of *epikrisis*, the status of metropolitan or even gymnasial elite member, and consequent access to the epheby. A metropolitan family (recognized through the *epikrisis*) could also originate from a metropolitan’s slave in a situation of *contubernium* with a metropolitan woman (P.Ryl. II 103, AD 134). Hence, in the Egyptian society of the *peregrini*, the social mobility of the lower strata appears to have been extremely dynamic. Later, the situation changed, when access to a bouletic position seems to have been reserved to those who could prove adequate wealth. No document clearly states that freedmen are forbidden from filling these positions, but we do not find any among the members of the single councils in the *metropoleis*, least of all in Alexandria.

Slavery did not disappear with the advent of Christianity (Rotman 2009; Keenan et al. 2014, section 9.3). Clergy and monks owned and traded slaves (as did wealthy pagan clerics like Ammon *Scholasticus*; see Chapter 30). Moreover, a new problem surfaced in Byzantine Egypt: as creditors had the right to enslave their debtors’ children, people of free status could lose their freedom; in some cases, freeborn people were even illegally enslaved. Desperate parents and other relatives addressed themselves to Christian communities for financial or other help. In addition, bishops and monasteries ransomed captives of war – a phenomenon also attested outside Egypt, from “Ireland to Edessa” (Klingshirn 1985). In the first half of the fifth century, the White Monastery, for instance, not only granted protection to about 20 000 refugees who had fled after an invasion of Nubians, paying doctors’ costs and cooking for them, but also ransomed 100 prisoners (for 40 000 myriads of *denarii*), and paid an additional sum of 10 *solidi* per freed person for their clothes, food, and safe return (Lopez 2013). A century later, in AD 567, the magistrate Flavius Theodoros bequeathed part of his fortune to Shenoute’s monastery at Atripe for “pious distributions and ransom of captives of war”; his own slaves were freed in his will (P.Cair.Masp. III 67312).

18.9 Conclusion

Under the Ptolemies, social identity was closely intertwined with ethnic identity. This means that initially, the highest levels within the civil administration and the army were largely restricted to the Greco-Macedonian immigrants, the so-called “Hellenes.” Subsequently, when the link between origin and social status softened, social promotion was connected with an extrinsic Hellenization: at least a Greek name and a fictitious ethnic, as well as a basic knowledge of the Greek language. Thus, wealthy Egyptians could – or had to – act as Greeks in a Greek environment, although they mostly stayed ethnically and culturally Egyptian.

Because wealth and status were mainly based on land- and/or office-holding, the elite classes mainly consisted of soldiers and officials allotted land by the king and of the priests of the Egyptian temples. The lower classes, of which we are comparatively poorly informed, comprised officials of the lower echelons of the army and administration, laborers, and employees in agriculture, trade, and crafts. The social conditions of their life were doubtless as manifold as their professions, despite being frequently underestimated by scholars on the basis of their Egyptian ethnicity (e.g. in the case of the royal peasants, *basilikoi georgoi*, and native soldiers, *machimoi*). The same holds for slaves, whose social status and standard of living depended not only on their owner’s status, but also on their operating conditions.

Roman provincialization entailed some considerable changes to the people living in Egypt: the Jewish part of the population, belonging to the group of the Hellenes under the Ptolemies, was “downgraded” to the rank of “Egyptians” (*Aigyptioi*), while the temples of the Egyptian cult had an enormous amount of land confiscated by the state and the priests were forced to pay poll tax and to carry out liturgies (with the rare exemption of some temples, classed as “illustrious”). Priests were also required to declare both their private property and that of the temple. The population was rigidly censused and society was strictly divided into hierarchies; the elites became increasingly fragile, and had to marry within their social group in order to maintain their status. The introduction of the *boule* in AD 200/1 and the *Constitutio Antoniniana* of 212 played an important part in redefining society; the highest positions were now occupied by the wealthy, who had the means to sustain liturgies and *honores* and to sit as members in the *boule*. Beyond them, society was articulated vertically, following various dynamics: from the owners, administrators, and tenants of a part of a holding or of real properties, to the workers, to the village-dwellers who did not own their land. These status and economic elites were characterized by a strong discontinuity: turnover was substantial, and downward mobility increased from the end of the second century and throughout the third. Byzantine society was characterized by a new type of hierarchy: the big estates belonging to the elites came to replace the state in many things, even tax-collecting.

FURTHER READING

There is no comprehensive study of social life and social identity in Greco-Roman Egypt. Lewis (1983, 1986) offer a comprehensible introduction to the subject, especially for students, using case studies from all over Egypt to provide a clear picture of social life,

identity, and mobility. For slavery in Greco-Roman Egypt, see C.Ptol.Sklav., a corpus of Ptolemaic texts on slaves, and the introductions and translations in Keenan et al. (2014, pp. 442–469).

Still worth reading is Rostovtzeff's (1941) *The Social and Economic History of the Hellenistic World* in three volumes, which paints a vivid picture of social life in Hellenistic times. P.Count presents a widespread study on the population of Ptolemaic Egypt, especially the Fayum: its society, families, and households, and their livestock, occupations, sociocultural standing, taxation, and so on (Clarysse and Thompson 2006). For the life of Zenon, the manager, see Pestman (1981) and Orrieux (1985). An archive providing interesting data on questions of social identity is that of the Cretan cavalry officer Dryton and his second wife Apollonia alias Senmonthis (Vandorpe 2002a; see Chapter 25).

For a local study of the economic, fiscal and social crisis that Egypt faced in the second century AD, see Blouin (2014), while for a general overview of Late Antique Egypt, see Bagnall (2003a).

CHAPTER NINETEEN

Ethnic Identity: Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans

Willy Clarysse

19.1 Mass Immigration of Greeks in the Early Ptolemaic Period

Unlike the Nubians, the Assyrians, and the Persians, who occupied Egypt with a minimum of troops and officials, Greeks immigrated in the wake of Alexander in large numbers, without the intention of returning to their home country. A large part of them were of course soldiers, who were attracted by the prospect of receiving substantial tracts of agricultural land (cavalry soldiers usually got 100 *arouras* or 27.5 ha; rented out, these provided a comfortable living), but there were also administrators and businessmen, like Zenon of Kaunos (see Chapters 17 and 18).

The Greeks who settled in Egypt can be recognized because for at least five generations they continued to call themselves after their place of origin outside Egypt: Athenians, Cyrenaeans, Cretans, Macedonians, Thracians, and so on. They came from all parts of the Greek world (and beyond), but Macedonia, the Balkans, and Cyrenaica are preponderant in the milieu of military settlers (Bagnall 1984). The view that most entered the country at the time of Ptolemy I has been doubted (Stefanou 2013); immigration probably continued for most of the third century BC.

It is risky to give exact figures, except for the Fayum. On the basis of some tax lists, the population of this nome was estimated at somewhat less than 100 000 in the mid-third century BC, 15% of which was (Greek) soldiers and another 15% Greek civilians (tax Hellenes, see later) (Clarysse and Thompson 2006, 2, pp. 92–94 and 138–140). The Greek presence in the Fayum was no doubt exceptionally high, but there were also large settlements in the Oxyrhynchite and Herakleopolite nomes, not to speak of the megacity Alexandria. It is clear, therefore, that Greek immigration was substantial. In a

recent contribution, Fischer-Bovet (2011) brings down the number of Greeks to 5% of the total population (including in Alexandria), but even that number – perhaps too low – involves 10 000 Greek families, which would have had a high social and economic impact on the country.

19.2 Ethnicity

Greeks in Ptolemaic Egypt are identified in notarial and official texts by their *origo* in a city or region outside Egypt (e.g. Athenian, Kaunian, Macedonian, Thracian, Judaeon) (Bickermann 1927; La'da 2002), but also by their Greek names (Apollonios and Zenon versus Petosiris and Psenamounis). Egyptians give their *idia* within Egypt and occur only rarely in Greek notarial documents. Although the two population groups often lived side by side, there was a tendency among Greek settlers to stick together in the same city quarter (such as the Carian quarter in Memphis, the Cretan quarter in Oxyrhynchos, the Jewish quarter in Alexandria, or the *amphodoi* of the Macedonians and the Bithynians in Arsinoe); Syron kome and Samareia were no doubt largely Syrian or Jewish, and in Trikomia one of the three *komai* (“villages”) was also Jewish, whereas Tholthis in the Oxyrhynchite nome was predominantly Cyrenaean (Clarysse 1998).

This was a kind of spontaneous grouping of people speaking the same language, belonging to the same social class, and having a similar lifestyle – which included public baths (Redon 2012b, 2016; see also Chapter 33) and private gymnasia, even in the villages. This so-called “ethnicity” is a social construct, determined by self-ascription and ascription by others: a person belongs to the group of “Greeks” if he or she considers him- or herself a Greek and if he or she is accepted by other members of this group (Goudriaan 1988, pp. 8–13). This, of course, implies that to some extent the person behaves like other members of the group (in terms of language, religious affiliations, lifestyle, etc.), but leaves the door open for accepting new members from different environments and even for having membership of more than one group at the same time. Ethnic identity is only one way of identifying persons, alongside social status, gender, age, and profession, all of which partially overlap (Mairs 2013).

19.3 A Double-Faced Society?

The dichotomy between Greeks and Egyptians can be followed in daily life, where Egyptians drank beer and ate emmer bread (*olyra*), while Greeks preferred wine and wheat (*pyros*); olive oil was imported and produced for the Greek section of the population, and in the Fayum village of Oxyrhyncha a special kind of cloved garlic was grown for Greek customers (Crawford 1973). The upper strata of society – the royal court, the high administration, and the top of the military – look almost completely Greco-Macedonian (Mooren 1978), whereas the world of the temples seems to have been reserved for the Egyptian upper classes.

But the situation was not always clear, especially in the later Ptolemaic Period. Thus, the tomb of the leading family in late second-century BC Edfu presented its members

simultaneously as high-ranking Greek officers and noblemen with court titles and as Egyptian priests, “royal brothers,” and “generals.” They were honored with traditional Hieroglyphic stelae and with Greek tombstones with perfect elegiac distichs. Aphrodisia daughter of Euagoras, wife of the *syngenes* Ptolemaios and mother of Apollonios in the Greek inscriptions, is apparently identical with Hathoretis (note the equivalence of Aphrodite and Hathor) daughter of *Iwmws* [= Euagoras], wife of the general and “brother of the king” Pamenches and mother of Pashai (Yoyotte 1969; this family is further discussed in Chapter 18). Similarly, two painted tombs in Kom el-Chougafa (Alexandria) contain a pharaonic scene with the embalmment of the deceased as Osiris above a scene with the rape of Persephone in Greek style (Guimier-Sorbets et al. 2015).

More than 200 papyri of the archive of Menches, a village scribe in late second-century BC Kerkeosiris, were reused for the mummies of the sacred crocodiles of Tebtynis (Verhoogt 1998). Like most village scribes, Menches has an Egyptian name and ethnicity. Polemon, the *epistates* (“mayor”) of Kerkeosiris, has a Greek name, as is usual for the holders of this administrative function, which developed from a military command. In the sole private contract in the archive, however, Menches is called a “native Greek” (*Hellen epichorios*), and he and his father have Greco-Egyptian double names: Menches alias Asklepiades, son of Petesouchos alias Ammonios. It is as good as certain that Polemon is Menches’ brother, and that he named his son Petesouchos after their common grandfather (Pestman 1983a). As in Edfu, the leading family in Kerkeosiris adapted their names and their ethnicity to their administrative position.

A similar situation applies to the *agoranomoi* of Pathyris. *Agoranomoi* are Greek notaries (alongside the Egyptian *monographoi*, who wrote Demotic contracts; see Chapter 12) and have without exception Greek names. Usually, we only know them from their names and their fluent professional handwritings. Four of them are known in Pathyris: the brothers Areios and Asklepiades, and their respective sons Ammonios and Hermias. Hermias, although writing fluently, makes so many syntactic blunders that his Greek background is dubious (Vierros 2012). Moreover, thanks to the archives of the provincial town of Pathyris, we know that these people too had double names, and that in Demotic texts they often used their Egyptian ones: Areios is also called Pelaïas, Asklepiades is Patseous, and Ammonios is Pakoibis. Ammonios and Areios were also members of the cavalry, and Asklepiades/Patseous was married to Senamounis according to an Egyptian marriage contract. Again, members of this family could present themselves as Greeks or as Egyptians according to the circumstances.

Recently, Colin (2014) suggested that the officials taking part in the burial of sacred ibises and hawks in Kom Ombo appear in the same group of texts alternatively with their Greek and their Egyptian names: thus, the village scribe of Ombos, Kallias son of Hermias, would be the same person as Keni-Hor son of Totoes (O.Prinz Joachim 25), while the *porthotes* priest (“superintendent of the ibises”) Hermias would be Peteharokeris (O.Prinz Joachim 26). In these two instances, the Greek ostraca use the Greek name, the Demotic ostraca the Egyptian name. Colin even attributes a second Egyptian name, Totoes, to the *strategos* Pelaïas. Although his proposal is hypothetical, it fits well the view of double identities for persons active in the administration.

A typical group within the Greek part of society was the cleruchs, professional soldiers who received a plot of land from the king for their military service (Scheuble-Reiter 2012;

see Chapter 11). They were especially numerous in the Arsinoite nome. In March 248 BC, Stratippos, “Macedonian belonging to the cavalry unit of Antiochos in the Herakleopolite nome,” addresses a petition to the king concerning unjust taxation of his newly planted vineyard in the Aphroditopolite nome. Six years earlier, his son Neoptolemos had already petitioned the vice-minister of finances (*hypodioiketes*) Diotimos about the same matter. Neoptolemos was also a military colonist in Philadelphieia, a village in the north-eastern Fayum. These documents preserve for us some of the earliest information about the Ptolemaic cleruchs. Neoptolemos was already an adult man in 254 BC; his father must then have been in his 40s or even 50s. Their names are so typical that they could have been taken from a New Comedy play: Strat-ippos combines the terms “army” and “horse,” Neo-ptolemos hints at a “new war” but is also the name of Achilles’ son in Homer. One generation later, most cleruchs have a fixed abode, but Stratippos lives in the Herakleopolites (south of the Fayum) and owns land on the other side of the Nile in the Aphroditopolite nome, whereas Neoptolemos lives in the north of the Fayum. Their main extra-military activity is viticulture, and from that point of view they act very much like “real” Greeks. Another 50 years later, however, a descendant of this same family (as is clear from the rare names) dedicates himself to the Egyptian god Anubis with a Demotic document, promising to pay a small amount of money every month for the rest of his life in exchange for protection against all kinds of demons. These self-dedications are well-known from second-century Tebtynis, and I consider them a kind of insurance with the priestly health service in the local temple (at Philadelphieia in this case). Interestingly, the party of the contract with the jackal-headed god is called “Onnophris alias Neoptolemos, son of Stratippos.” Apparently, he uses also his Egyptian name for the occasion. His father is married to the Egyptian lady Haynchis, which may help to explain why the family put their trust in the local divinity (Clarysse 1988a). In Philadelphieia, the name Stratippos continues to be popular among the elite until the early third century AD, whereas elsewhere it has disappeared at the end of the Ptolemaic Period (Clarysse 2016).

19.4 Changing Ethnicity

Although in most of the preceding examples it is not clear (and probably not important) whether a family developed from native to Greek or vice versa, on the whole the social prestige of the Greek way of life and the practical advantages of Greek as the administrative language of the realm may have led Egyptians to “go Greek.”

Thus, in late second-century BC Kerkeosiris, the Egyptian policeman Nektsaphthis son of Petosiris adopted the Greek names Maron son of Dionysios for himself and his father after he made promotion to the *katoikia*, the class of Greek military landowners (Crawford 1971, p. 63).

When money was introduced in Egypt by the Greeks, banks were established all over the country (see Chapter 14). As was to be expected, the banking business was in Greek hands, and nearly all bankers have Greek names. To a large extent, however, their names are common and undistinctive: Ptolemaios, Apollonios, and Ammonios, names that could easily have been adopted by Egyptians turning Greek. In fact, the only banker who is known outside his banking activity (which we mainly know from bankers’ signatures

under tax receipts) has a double name: Herakleodoros alias Semtheus. Since he lived in the Herakleopolite nome, where Herakles is the Greek counterpart to the local god Semtheus, he was probably of Egyptian origin (Clarysse and Vandorpe 1998b). The same may be true for many of his colleagues, although we have no way to check.

The family of Hakoris provides a unique example of how a leading Egyptian family became fully or largely Hellenized. A huge inscription, carved in Greek letters, dedicates a rock-cut Isis temple in Tenis/Hakoris to Ptolemy V Epiphanes. The text can be dated to 199–194 BC, at the time of the Great Thebaid Revolt (see Chapter 3). It is written in the name of Hakoris son of Hergeus, clearly a native grandee, who advertises his loyalty to the troubled Ptolemaic king. His name returns in a fragmentary papyrus letter connected with the crushing of the native revolt by the general Komanos in 186 BC. The town Tenis was renamed “city of Hakoris” in this period, probably after this very man. A generation later, during the invasion of Antiochus IV (169–168 BC), a battle takes place in the Delta, in which 150 officers of the enemy party (no doubt Antiochus and his ally Ptolemy VI) are taken prisoner (P.Köln IV 186). They are treated harshly, with the sole exception of Euphron son of Hakoris, “because of the good services of his father Hakoris.” When one realizes that Euphron “the cheerful one” is a perfect rendering of Hergeus (Egyptian *hry* = to be pleased), then it is clear that Euphron is the grandson of the Ptolemaic ally, but that he has taken a Greek name instead of or alongside his Egyptian one. Toward the end of the century, a Demotic contract of the same town cites the local grain measure as “measure of *3mphi*rm”: measure of Euphron. Apparently, the onomastic Hellenization is complete by then. But, one wonders whether Akoreus, the native councilor of Queen Cleopatra in Lucan’s *Pharsalia*, did not continue the native onomastic tradition of this same family (Clarysse 1991b).

As is clear from the preceding, interference of Greek and Egyptian ethnicity by individual persons is often visible for us through the use of Greco-Egyptian double names, which are a typical feature of Ptolemaic Egypt (Coussement 2016). What we see, however, is only the tip of the iceberg, because usually a single name is chosen according to the circumstances. Thus, Menches’ double name is attested in only a single private document. Similarly, the bilingual farmer Dionysios son of Kephalas uses his Greek name in the Greek texts of his archive, and his Egyptian name Plenis in the Demotic texts; the double name is used only once, probably soon after he adopted his Greek name upon entering the army (Pap.Lugd. Bat. XX, introd.). In Kerkeosiris, the well-known farmers Marres son of Marres and Pyrros son of Sarapion can be identified with Dikaïos and Pmersis, respectively, because they occupy the same position in different lists of cultivators and because the Greek and Egyptian names have the same meaning (Clarysse 1985, p. 65; Coussement 2016, p. 298).

Even the Ptolemaic kings presented themselves with a double face: they were Greek kings, living in the Greek city of Alexandria, proud of their Macedonian origin and ignorant of the native language (Clarysse 1998, p. 12), but on the temple walls and Hieroglyphic monuments they were represented as pharaohs, with five names, of which four were traditional Egyptian. Even the gods themselves could be shown as Greek or Egyptian according to the circumstances: thus, Egyptian Osor-apis became Greek Sarapis in Alexandria, Aphrodite is the Greek form of Hathor (as in Aphrodisia alias Hathoretis; see earlier), and Athena may refer to Neith of Sais or to Thoeiris in Oxyrhynchos (Quaeghebeur et al. 1985). Especially in the Roman Period, they were often represented in Greek form, their Egyptian background being indicated by a crown or some other symbol (Rondot 2013).

19.5 Greek Tax Privilege

All this may give the impression that people had a free choice in adopting a Greek name and a Greek ethnicity, on condition that their self-representation was accepted by the local Greek community, without any government interference (Goudriaan 1988, p. 119). This impression is reinforced by the behavior of the wife and daughters of the cavalry officer Dryton, who were apparently free to use Greek and Demotic notarial service and Greek or Demotic names as fitted the occasion (Vandorpe 2002b, 2011).

Several tax lists, however, (re)published in P.Count, show that this was not the case and that the Ptolemaic administration kept a detailed count of privileged categories (*ethne*) among the population, which included priests, doctors, and teachers, but also Greeks and Persians.

Between 263 and the end of the third century BC, all adults had to pay a yearly poll tax, which gradually diminished from 1.5 drachmas to 4 obols for males, and about half that sum for females. Only a few groups, such as schoolteachers and police, were exempt (probably as part of their payment). To this so-called salt tax (*halike*), which did not depend – or no longer depended – on consumption, was added a tiny tax of 1 obol, called the obol tax in Greek, for males only. From this tax, Greeks, Persians, and Arabs were exempted (Clarysse and Thompson 2006, 2, pp. 36–74); these ethnic groups were put on a par with numerous occupational groups, such as brewers, donkey drivers, and Isis priests. An obol is no more than half a day's wage for an unskilled laborer, and at first sight it does not seem worthwhile to keep track of every single male in the country in order to establish whether or not he was Egyptian. But by doing so, the Ptolemaic government established a kind of racial policy. Since Greeks and Persians (no doubt second-rate Greeks, whatever their origin; see also Vandorpe 2008 for the second century BC) were counted side by side with occupational groups, they apparently also escaped trade taxes: if donkeys were needed for the transport of officials or wine for passing troops, the “Greeks” were not on the list of donkey drivers or wine merchants. They were thus more privileged than it would appear at first sight. Although the obol tax apparently disappeared after 231 BC, the divide between the two population groups was no doubt maintained in other ways. Ethnicity formed the basis of a racially inspired government policy, by which Greeks were fiscally privileged over Egyptians. As a result, the ethnic appurtenance of everyone was controlled by the government, and changes of identity, either by name or by ethnicity, were severely punished.

In P.Count (Clarysse and Thompson 2006, 2, pp. 138–146), the Greeks are called “tax Hellenes.” They are listed separately from the military (who were of course also Greeks), and amount to about 16.5% of the population in the Arsinoite nome. They have Greek names (among more than 4000 persons in the tax lists, there is not a single double name), and most of them no doubt claimed Greek descent as well. However, seven persons added to the 1823 “Greeks” of P.Count 2, l. 499 were “men of Elephantine” and “men of Philae” (ll. 501–504). These categories are known from other texts to be Egyptian. Here, clearly, some Egyptian families got access to the group of the tax Hellenes. Even more interesting in this respect is P.Count 4, where taxpayers are listed house by house. The text clearly shows Greeks and Egyptians living side by side in the same street.

They are distinguished by the amount they pay (Greek males pay 1 drachma, Egyptians 1 drachma 1 obol) and by their names: Greeks have Greek names, Egyptians have Egyptian names. Pasikles son of Nehemsesis (l. 116) and Diodoros son of Paos (l. 142) are the only persons in their families to have Greek names and to pay 1 drachma. Their fathers, brothers, and wives have Egyptian names and males pay 1 drachma 1 obol, which includes the obol tax. Similarly, the tax Hellene Protarchos son of Phanesis (l. 100) is well imbedded in an Egyptian family. The only tax Hellene with an Egyptian name is “Petechonsis son of Imouthes the scribe” (P.Count 4.42), who can be identified with a well-known district scribe of the same area. As a member of the Greek administration on a level above the village, he received the tax privileges of the Hellenes, but secretarial officials of all classes usually stuck to their Egyptian names, and so does Petechonsis here. His Hellenization is more than just nominal, however, because he headed an office where Greek was the official language, and in his private life he kept a slave – the only Egyptian in the lists to do so.

19.6 *Divide et Impera*: “Greeks among the Egyptians”

After the disappearance of the obol tax in 231 BC, we do not have explicit information about the government policy concerning ethnic groups. The famous ordinance by which Ptolemy VIII linked the use of Greek and Demotic in lawsuits to the language of the documents in the case, rather than to the personal status of the parties (P.Tebt. I 5; see Pestman 1990, no. 8), seems to point to some rapprochement, but probably the upper-class Greeks (being upper class was often linked with being or becoming Greek) continued to distinguish themselves from the population at large (by sending their children to the gymnasium, for instance, or by having a house in town).

It is generally accepted that Augustus’ victory over Cleopatra brought about great changes. Already in 23 BC, Augustus had introduced a new and heavy poll tax, the *laographia*. In most areas, the *laographia* amounted to 16 drachmas, but in the Fayum it went up to 40 – more than a full month of the minimum wage. It was a punitive tax, because Egypt’s queen had been declared an enemy of the Roman people, and every male adult (between age 14 and 61) in the country had to pay. Only citizens of Alexandria, Naucratis, and Ptolemais escaped, perhaps as a result of Augustus’ *clementia* when he visited the capital. All other subjects were considered Egyptians, even the descendants of Greek soldiers. From the beginning, however, these de facto Greeks were fiscally privileged, and paid at a reduced rate – not unlike what had happened with the salt tax two centuries earlier. For this, the Romans, like the early Ptolemies, had to draw up lists of the “Greeks among the Egyptians.” This so-called metropolite class did not include all inhabitants of the *metropolis*, but only the local gentry – a limited number of those who claimed Greek ethnicity. In the Arsinoite nome, for instance, a numerus clausus of 6475 Greek colonists seems to have been the starting point (Canducci 1990). Those who had passed the control (*epikrisis*) paid 20 drachmas in the Arsinoite nome, 12 in the Oxyrhynchite nome, and 8 in the Herakleopolite nome. Another similar group, partly overlapping with the metropolites, was the gymnasial class (*hoi apo gymnasion*): those whose families had

entry to the gymnasium. For both groups, boys had to undergo an official control (*epikrisis*) at the age of 14 before being allowed in. Metropolitans had to prove that they were themselves members of this class, on the basis of earlier census declarations or official population registers. The *apo gymnasion* had to show that the forebears of the child – on both sides – were included in the original list of gymnasium members in AD 4/5, or else the revised lists of 56/7 and 72/3. Both the metropolitans and the *apo gymnasion* were closed groups. One application for entry into the gymnasial class, dated AD 269, traces the candidate's forefathers back over 265 years (Kruse 2013a)!

The Roman government maintained the distinctions between the different status groups by imposing fines on those who in some way or other tried to move upward on the social ladder. The *Gnomon of the Idios Logos*, a set of rules established by Augustus and preserved, with some adaptations, in a papyrus of the second half of the second century AD, illustrates a policy of impeding social mobility and keeping the distinctions immutable (BGU V 1210). Thus, “those born of a citizen mother and an Egyptian remain Egyptians, but inherit from both parents” (Section 38); “if a Roman man or woman lives together with citizens or Egyptians, the children follow the inferior status” (Section 39); “if an Egyptian registers a son as an ephebe (i.e. as a future citizen of a Greek polis), a sixth (of his possessions) is confiscated” (Section 44); and “the son of a Syrian man and a citizen woman...married an Egyptian and was sentenced to a fixed fine” (Section 51). One exception is Section 47: “When a citizen woman lives with an Egyptian without knowing it (*kat' agnoian*) as if he were a citizen, she will not be fined. When a birth certificate is deposited for children of the couple, the citizenship will be maintained for them.” The clause of ignorance in Section 47 shows that the division into different groups was to some extent artificial.

19.7 Greekness in the *Metropoleis* Upgraded

In the later Ptolemaic, and certainly in the Roman Period, the Greek elite gradually left the villages, where the military colonists had been established in the third century BC, and withdrew to the *metropoleis*, keeping their land and perhaps also their country houses. In the city, they enjoyed a civilized lifestyle, with their gymnasia, their luxurious bath houses, their colonnaded streets, their marketplaces, and their public buildings. A kind of informal city government headed by the gymnasiarch supervised social life in the town, including sports events and public buildings (Bowman and Rathbone 1992). In AD 200, the *metropoleis* received their own city councils (*boulai*), modeled after the Roman Senate (i.e. consisting of an oligarchy of wealthy landowners, often former city magistrates, who kept their seats for life). In this way, they were upgraded toward the status of Greek *poleis* or Roman municipia and administered the surrounding countryside, together with the *strategos* – the government official who previously had held sole authority.

In the third century, the *metropoleis* behaved like other *poleis* in the eastern empire, not only in the political sphere with their councils and annual magistracies, but also through their emperor cult, their gymnasia, and their *gerousiai*. Whereas in the earlier period athletes from Egypt could only take part in the international games after acquiring Alexandrian citizenship, now Hermopolis as a city became world-famous thanks to its boxers and

pankratiasts (Remijsen 2014a). The cities adorned themselves with prestigious epithets, such as *lampros kai lamprotatos*, *archaiotatos*, and *semnotatos* (“splendid and most splendid,” “most ancient,” “most reverend”) (Litinas 1995). They organized international athletic games and erected buildings and colonnades subsidized by local sponsors (*euergetai*), who received stone or bronze statues in exchange. In the third century, however, together with their new status, the cities and their elites often fell into financial difficulties, partly because of the empire-wide economic crisis, partly as a result of the system itself.

The *Constitutio Antoniniana* of AD 212, which gave Roman citizenship to almost all (free) inhabitants of the empire, although it introduced a fundamental change from a juridical point of view, hardly affected the social order of the country. During most of the third century, metropolite elites continued to draw up their stemmata, proving that they descended from “those of the gymnasium” in the first century. The top of the local gentry mixed with Alexandrian landowners, and the hierarchical system between high and low now also divided the members of the council (Tacoma 2006, pp. 140–150).

19.8 Ethnicity in Roman Egypt: Greek as Language of Power

From a social point of view, the distinction between the privileged Greeks in the towns and the Egyptian peasants in the countryside did not disappear, although class prejudice played a greater role in this than ethnic identity (Rowlandson 2013). An imperial edict of Caracalla, dated AD 215 and preserved on the very same papyrus where he broadens Roman citizenship to all inhabitants of the empire three years earlier, contains the following order: “All Egyptians who are in Alexandria and especially the peasants who have fled from elsewhere and can easily be detected, are to be thrown out by all means, with the exception of the pork sellers, the Nile shippers and those who bring down reeds for heating the baths. But the others, throw them out, as by their very numbers and their uselessness they bring unrest in the city.” After a few more afterthoughts, Caracalla concludes: “Among the linen weavers the genuine Egyptians (*hoi alethinoi Aigyptioi*) can be easily recognised by their speech, which shows that they have adopted the looks and the clothing (*opseis kai schema*) of another class. And also in their way of life and their habits, their manners which are contrary to civilized behavior, reveal that they are Egyptian peasants” (Sel.Pap. II 215).

The Alexandrians no doubt applauded this forcible eviction, just as did the Syracusan ladies in Theocritus’ 15th Idyll when Ptolemy II ejected the “Egyptian robbers” from their city. It is far from clear, however, how the police were to identify these Egyptians: their looks and clothing were apparently not distinctive, their uncivilized behavior was not so easy to detect, and their language – was it Egyptian, or did they speak Greek with the wrong accent? Greeks in the *chora* had even more problems in maintaining their own identity, notwithstanding sneers to the “barbarian and inhuman (*ananthropoi*)” (Sel.Pap. I 152 = P.Oxy. XIV 1681) or “stupid (*anaistheto*) Egyptians” (P.Uppsala Frid. 10). In fact, many Egyptians had taken over Greek habits, like going to the public baths, drinking wine (beer seems to disappear from the menu in the Roman Period), and eating wheat bread, while most Greeks had adapted to at least some of the native customs, like animal

worship and mummification. That the distinctions were to some extent artificial also results from a petition by G. Julius Niger, a veteran of the Roman army, against Isidoros son of Achillas, an Egyptian fellow (*anthropos Aigyptios*) who had insulted him, a Roman citizen. In fact, Isidoros was “secretary of the superintendents of sequestered property”: he clearly belonged to the Greek elite of Karanis, and was even the nephew of C. Julius Niger (SB XXIV 16252). Apparently, ethnicity could be used to fit the occasion and was not prominent at all times (Rowlandson 2013, pp. 236–237).

Greek ethnicity was therefore protected not only by government measures but also by the Hellenic minority themselves: entry to the gymnasium was restricted, and Jews and a fortiori Egyptians were no longer accepted as candidates for Alexandrian citizenship (the former were liquidated after the revolt in AD 117; see Chapter 20). Hellenic identity was upheld in the school program, where children read Homer, Euripides, and Demosthenes (cf. the text on the blackboard of a classroom in Dakhla; Cribiore and Davoli 2013), with hardly any interest in the exploits of the Egyptian pharaohs (one single papyrus fragment of Manetho has been found against nearly 2000 Homer papyri) or the Ptolemaic kings (see also Chapter 31). Writing and speaking “Classical” Greek was preferred to everyday *koine* language. Looking back to ancient Sparta, some elite families gave their children names like Spartiates and Leonidas, although Ptolemaios, Arsinoe, and Kleopatra remained popular in the Roman Period and point to some form of identification with the Ptolemaic past. Even Egyptian religion was Hellenized, with the dead represented in Greek fashion (style of painting, hairstyle, cloth, jewels) on their mummy portraits and the gods depicted as Greek divinities, with a few symbols pointing at their underlying Egyptian identity (Rondot 2013). Greek sophists were welcome visitors in Alexandria (e.g. Dio Chrysostomus) and even in the *chora* (Aelius Aristides, even if the inscription in his honor was not found in Egypt) (SEG XXXIV 1542; Bingen 1987), and some champions of Hermopolis became leading members of the international athletic association (van Minnen 1989; add P.Bagnall 56).

19.9 Late Roman Egypt: Greek as Language of High Culture

If Greco-Roman Egypt was a colonial society, it was clearly settlement rather than exploitation colonialism: Greeks were present in relatively large numbers over most of the country and for many centuries. Greek was at the same time a language of power, a language of culture, a lingua franca, and a mother tongue for part of the population. It was well imbedded at all levels of society: in the temple of Narmouthis in the later second century AD, young priests received a bilingual education, as is clear from the ostraca archive found at Medinet Madi (TM Arch 534, 536). In the Roman Period, Demotic almost completely disappears from view, except for the temple archives of Tebtynis and Soknopaiou Nesos, so that many papyrologists can perfectly well do their job without knowing the native languages. It looks as if Egypt has become a Greek country except in month names, toponyms, and anthroponyms.

The emergence of Coptic in the fourth century is, therefore, something of a surprise. The Coptic language is clearly a continuation of Demotic Egyptian, although where the Hieroglyphic and Demotic script continued age-old scribal traditions, and avoided Greek

loan words (Clarysse 2013a), Coptic shows us that spoken Egyptian was heavily influenced by Greek, not only in thousands of loan words, but also in its syntax (see Chapter 31). One of the purposes of the new script was to make available the sacred books of Christians and Manichaeans to the native population, and Bible translations remain as close as possible to the original Greek text, resulting in changes of word order. Classical Greek literature was never translated into Egyptian, because it could only be appreciated in the poetic language of Homer or the Classical Attic of Plato and Demosthenes (see also Box 19.1).

In the Pachomian monastery of Pbow, the 20-odd Greek speakers (called *hellenistai* in the *Vita Prima* 95 and in the *Letter of Ammon* 7) were grouped in a separate house, headed by the Alexandrian Theodoros, who also appears repeatedly as interpreter for Pachomius, who had only a limited knowledge of Greek. The common language in the

Box 19.1 “Coptic”: A Terminological Muddle.

by Willy Clarysse

The words “Coptic” and “Copt” have a wide range of meanings, and the interpretation often depends on the context in which they are used.

In present-day situations, Copts are Christian Egyptians, most of them belonging to the miaphysite church. They constitute between 5 and 15% of the Egyptian population, which is overwhelmingly Muslim. There is also a large Coptic diaspora. In Egypt, the Copts speak Arabic, like all Egyptians, but in their religious services, some songs are still in the old Coptic language.

When the term is used in connection with the Ancient world, the opposition is either between Coptic (*aigyptisti*, “language of the people of Egypt”) and Greek (*hellenisti*, “Ionian”) speakers, or between Christians and pagans. Coptic is the last stage of the old Egyptian language (see Chapter 31). This language disappears from view in the Roman Period, because it was no longer written except in the declining temple environment. Most people in the countryside, however, continued to speak several Egyptian dialects. The native language reappears in written form in the fourth century, now using Greek characters, to which between six and eight signs are added, derived from Demotic. It also includes numerous Greek loan words. The Bible and other Christian and Manichean works were translated into Coptic, and people also wrote private communications (e.g. letters) in their native tongue, but official and notarial documents were written only in Greek until the sixth century AD (see Chapter 12). In the bilingual society of Late Antique Egypt, Greek and Coptic were not the languages of separate population groups, but rather had each its own functional domains, Greek being the dominant and Coptic the minority language (Richter 2009, pp. 401–403). The well-known notary Dioskoros of Aphrodito was among the first to draw up some contracts in Coptic (Papaconstantinou 2008; see Chapter 25). In the topsy-turvy world of the monasteries, Coptic even became the norm, and Greek speakers had to adapt to it. After AD 450, in that same milieu, the Coptic

language was also used as an identity marker against the Chalcedonians, who preferred the use of Greek (Papaconstantinou 2007, p. 292). Arabization of the country started in the Fatimid Period (after AD 973) (Papaconstantinou 2012) and led to the use of Arabic as the official language of the Christian Church. Coptic is a dead language now, used only in prayers and songs in the liturgical service.

From the fourth century AD onward, a religious distinction is made between Christians and pagans, indicated by the Greek loan words *christianos* and *Hellen* in the Coptic language. The term “Hellene” was used for pagans because polytheism continued among part of the Greek-speaking elite after it had disappeared in the population at large. Often, however, these so-called “pagans” were also Christians, but because they were steeped in Classical culture – both literature and the graphic arts, including Homeric mythology – fundamentalist Christians such as the abbot Shenoute considered them crypto-pagans; this too may be indicated by the term “Hellene.” In modern scholarly literature, Christians are usually called “Copts” and the Christian church is called the “Coptic Church,” even though it functioned for centuries in Greek as well as in Coptic. It would be wrong to divide the Coptic Church in Late Antiquity into a Greek-speaking Chalcedonian (melkite) and an Egyptian-speaking (“Coptic”) anti-Chalcedonian section. Rather, each language had its own domain, oral and written, and they were used side by side by the same persons (van der Vliet 2013, pp. 193–196).

The same distinction between Classical (Greek) and native (Coptic) art is maintained by art historians (but see Schrenk 2004, pp. 15–16, who prefers “Late Antique to Early Islamic”). Simultaneously, however, the word “Coptic” is used as a chronological indication for all kinds of artifacts produced between AD 300 and 1000. “Coptic textiles,” then, refers to textiles found in Egypt and dated to the Late Antique or Early Arabic Period (see Box 17.1). These may present Christian subject matter, but also pagan mythological (e.g. Dionysiac) subjects. Here again, “Classical” and “Christian” are not synonyms for “Greek” and “Egyptian” (“Coptic”), but two modes of expression used side by side, with lots of connecting links.

monasteries is Coptic, and the Hellenists have to use interpreters or to learn the native language. This situation is a conscious inversion of the values of the outside world, where Greek remained of course the *lingua franca* (Papaconstantinou 2014).

In the Byzantine Period, the word *Hellen* receives a new religious meaning. Hellenes are no longer descendants of the Greeks, nor even Greek speakers, but pagans, or more precisely persons who are steeped in Greek culture and therefore considered pagans by fundamentalist Christians. Paganism survived, for instance in Alexandria, where Greek philosophy continued to be practiced at least until the death of Hypatia (AD 415) and Heraiskos (AD 480–490). The archive of the lawyer (*scholasticus*) Ammon shows a prominent pagan family in Panopolis in the time of Constantius (van Minnen 2002b; see Chapter 30). Several family members are pagan priests, but Ammon’s brother Harpokration is also a panegyrist at the imperial court, and Ammon shows off his rhetorical skills in a long letter to his mother. In Late Antiquity, Panopolis was a major center of Greek culture, with poets such as Triphiodorus, Cyrus, Pamprepus, and Nonnus and scholars such as Horapollon (Box 6.1). Not all of them were pagans, however – quite the contrary (Cameron 2007).

Nonnus, for instance, known for his Classical epos *Dionysiaka*, also paraphrased the gospel of John in hexameters. They were all steeped, however, in the Classical traditions, and their mythological writings hardly show any influence of their Christian background. What's more, Hellenism became a link with old Egyptian culture, for instance in the Hieroglyphica of Horapollon and the hermetic writings (Bowersock 1990, pp. 55–69). When, around AD 400, the abbot Shenoute organized a raid of the house of the pagan Gessius, and found statues of idols there, he concluded that Gessius was still a pagan, but for Gessius himself, these may just have been works of art in the Hellenic (and native Egyptian) style, much like his books on Classical mythology (Emmel 2002; Cameron 2007).

On a different level, Dioskoros, the sixth-century notary of the village of Aphrodito, was also acquainted with Classical literature: he owned copies of Homer, Menander, a life of Isocrates, and grammatical exercises (conjugation tables), and produced scores of *enkonomia*, petitions, and *epithalamia* in verse (Fournet 1999). As a notary, he also wrote long contracts in Greek. Although he was clearly a Christian, he was no doubt considered a Hellene in the broader sense, because he was thoroughly Hellenized, even though he used the Coptic language for everyday business (Papaconstantinou 2010, pp. 95–98).

In the early Pachomian monasteries, Greek (and Latin) was presented as the language of learning, whereas native Coptic (the language of the simple people) was the language of the heart, and in a certain sense gave more direct access to God. As a result, monks preferred Coptic to Greek, Alexandrians who wanted to live in the monasteries often learned Coptic, and leading figures of the monastic movement were assisted by interpreters in their contacts with foreign visitors, even if they did in fact understand Greek (Papaconstantinou 2014).

The Greek identity in Late Antique Egypt also experienced some competition from the Roman one, as for the first time in Egypt Latin language and literature were to some extent promoted, since they invoked the grandeur of the Roman past (for more details, see Chapter 5).

The gradual decline of Greek as the language of culture and education can be followed in some detail on the basis of the Leuven Database of Ancient Books (LDAB). This database lists, for Egypt, some 8500 Greek manuscripts and 5500 items in other languages (Hieroglyphic, Demotic, Coptic, Syriac, Aramaic, etc.). The Greek documentation dominates the picture until the third century AD, but then diminishes both in absolute numbers and in terms of percentage (Figure 19.1; the more than 400 Syriac texts from the Wadi Natrun are not included, since they were written in Syria and came to Egypt only in the tenth century). What's more, within the Greek texts, the roll and the codex – the two means of book production in Antiquity – give place to single sheets in the later period. These sheets mostly contain school exercises and magical and liturgical texts (Figure 19.2). The ascendancy of single sheets shows that Greek was still learned at school, used for magical purposes (one did not need to understand it), and employed in the church, but that it had largely disappeared as a medium for literature long before the arrival of the Arabs. I suggest that Greek remained in use in some special circumstances (the town hall, the church, the school), but was superseded by Coptic in daily life.

Greek remained, however, the language of the administration for at least two generations after the Byzantines left Egypt, while for nearly 300 years, Coptic became the dominant language. Although in AD 706 the central chancellery in Cairo was ordered to work in Arabic only, Greek and Coptic remained in use in the local administration during most

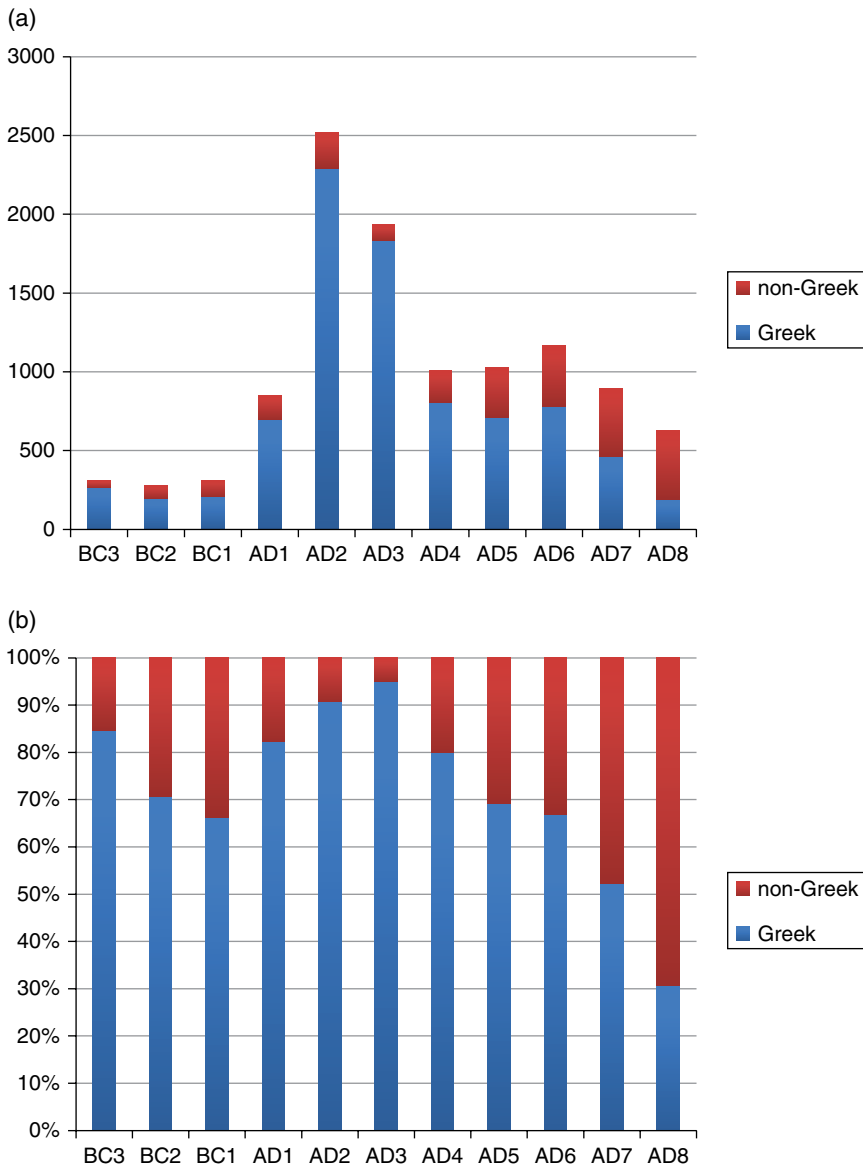


Figure 19.1 Greek and non-Greek ancient books: (a) absolute figures; (b) percentages. Cf. LDAB. Source: courtesy Willy Clarysse.

of the eighth century. Still, in the course of three centuries, Arabic, the new language of power, succeeded in replacing Coptic – something Greek had failed to do after a millennium (Wasserstein 2003; Papaconstantinou 2012). Greek remained present in the Melkite church of Alexandria until the Middle Ages, as witnessed by trilingual stelae and by a Greek abstract under the autograph statement of a Coptic bishop in AD 1372 (Plumley 1975, pp. 24–25).

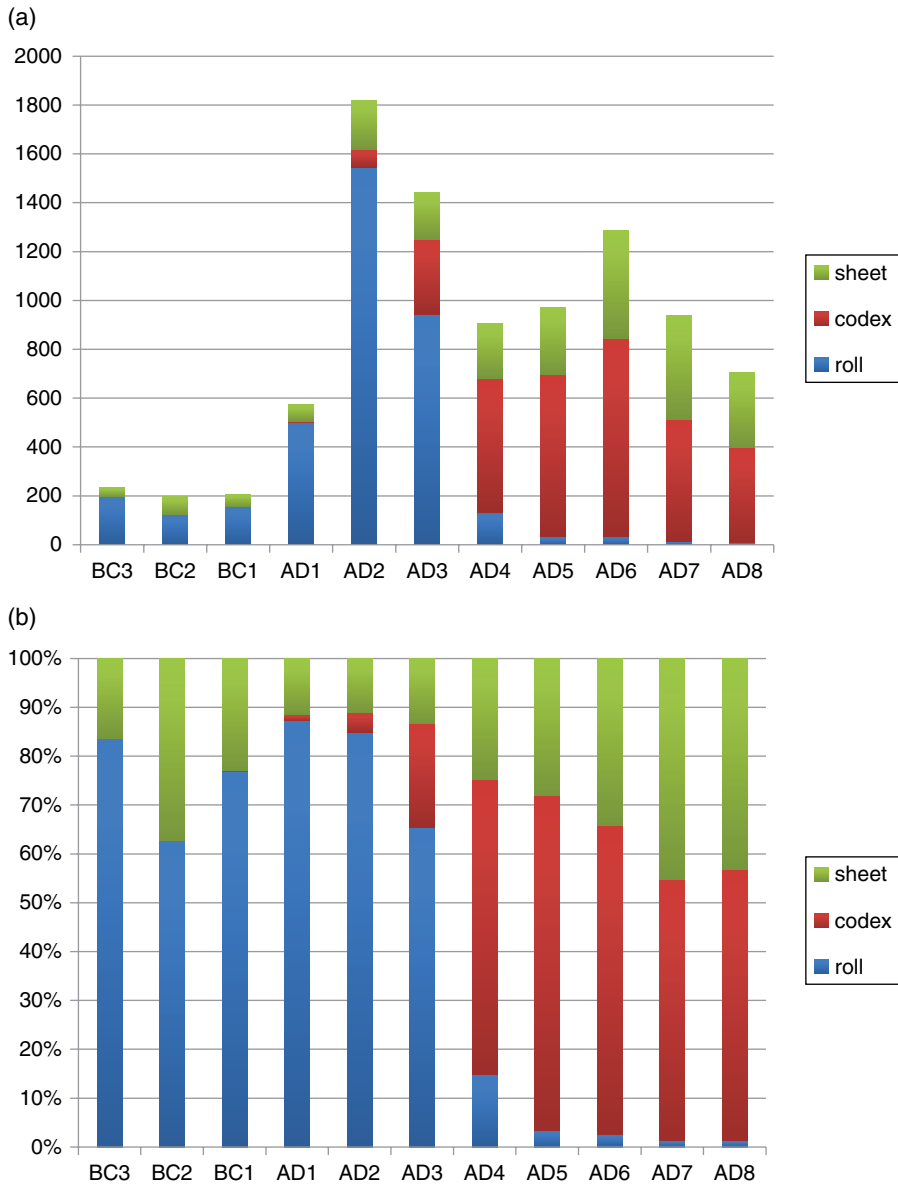


Figure 19.2 Use of the roll, the codex, and the single sheet for Greek texts: (a) absolute figures; (b) percentages. Cf. LDAB. Source: courtesy Willy Clarysse.

FURTHER READING

Hall (2002) offers a general view of the problem of ethnicity. Lewis (1986) and Bilde et al. (1992) concentrate on Ptolemaic Egypt. Bilde's book is more theoretical, whereas Lewis presents a few typical families for a general public. Vanderpe (2012) deals with different forms of identity (ethnic, religious, social, gendered, cultural, linguistic) in the Roman Period.

CHAPTER TWENTY

Ethnic Minority Groups

Sylvie Honigman

20.1 A Wide Range of Immigrants

The immigrants who settled in Egypt during the first century of Greco-Macedonian domination came not only from all over the Greek world, but also from other regions of the eastern basin of the Mediterranean. Their ethnic diversity is reflected in the impressive variety of ethnic labels and ethnically significant personal names found in papyri, ostraca, and inscriptions of the third century BC. While most ethnic labels are only documented through a small number of occurrences, Thracians and Jews are particularly well represented, both as individuals and as communities. From the southern Levant, alongside Jews, we also find Phoenicians, “Syrians,” Samaritans, and, in the second century, Idumeans.

These migratory fluxes from Thrace and the southern Levant reflect two very different situations. In the third century, immigration from Thrace was a novelty, and resulted from the same conditions as that from the Greek world. To judge from papyrological evidence, it came to an end by the last decades of this century, just like Greek immigration. In contrast, mobility from the Levant to Egypt was a constant, and was periodically revitalized by political and economic vicissitudes. The Greco-Macedonian conquest of Egypt was only one high peak in a long history.

Before the Ptolemies, the Saïtes (ca. 664–525 BC) and the Persians (525–404 and 343–332 BC) had attracted numerous foreign mercenaries and traders to the country, and (some of) these communities outlived the Greco-Macedonian conquest. In Memphis, the temples of the Phoenicio-Egyptians, Carians, and Hellenomemphites were still active in the mid-third century BC, enjoying privileges from the king (Thompson 2011b, pp. 104–108, 2012, pp. 76–92). In Upper Egypt, Aramaic ostraca dating to the third and early second centuries BC cast light on the continued existence of well-organized Jewish

communities in Elephantine, Thebes, and Edfu (Honigman 2009, pp. 119–124; Thompson 2011b, p. 103).

This chronological and geographical sketch prompts several questions: (i) How do we identify ethnic groups in the sources? (ii) Which groups qualify as an ethnic minority? (iii) To what extent is this concept pertinent? (iv) Did ethnic minority groups have a special status, legally and socially? (v) Did they perceive themselves as such? (vi) Insofar as they did enjoy privileges, were these congenial to their acknowledged status as ethnic minorities, or did they share them with other social groups? (vii) In what ways was their distinct identity expressed? The answers to most of these questions are different in Ptolemaic and Roman times. Given that fine surveys of Roman times are readily available, the present discussion will dwell on Ptolemaic times in greater detail. The questions will be addressed through three topics: the means of identification, that is to say personal names and ethnic labels; group institutions, in particular the *politeumata*; and cultic buildings. A final section surveys the history of Jews in Roman times.

Unavoidably, the Jews feature prominently in the present chapter, both because they are the group best documented – being by far the most visible in documentary sources, and the only minority group from and about which we have literary sources – and because they are the most extensively researched. However, by studying them as part of a wider pool of “ethnic minority groups,” we may gain a more accurate view of what their distinctiveness consisted in.

20.2 Identifying Ethnic Groups: Ethnic Labels and Personal Names

In Ptolemaic Egypt, the ethnic status of an individual was part of his or her official identity; *ethnika* (ethnic labels) were recorded in all legal documents, alongside personal names and patronymics (father’s name). Personal names and *ethnika* are the main tools by which we may identify individuals and groups of non-Greek foreign origin, but their handling is delicate (see also Chapter 19).

The Jewish and Phoenician communities residing in Egypt since Persian times maintained their own languages, and furthermore continued to use native names. Conversely, case studies have shown that immigrants who arrived after Alexander tended to switch from ethnically significant (“epichoric”) to common Greek names over the course of three generations. This was true of the Idumeans of Memphis and Hermopolis Magna (Thompson 1984), and Thracian personal names vanish from our evidence by the end of the third century BC. However, the analysis of this evolution in terms of identity is delicate. On the one hand, the switch to Greek names did not necessarily mean “assimilation.” Thus, the Idumeans continued to express their distinct identity through their predilection for Greek names invoking Apollo (Apollonios, Apollodoros), with whom they equated the Idumean chief god Qos. In Hermopolis, a cultic association still revered Apollo through rites of distinctly Semitic type in the second century AD (Thompson 1984, pp. 1070–1071). On the other hand, the behavior of these minorities is not necessarily remarkable when we compare it with Egyptian village communities. These frequently developed epichoric names, which were linked to local cults. Consequently, on what

should we insist? On the fact that these Idumeans lost their native names, or that they recreated epichoric ones in Greek? On the fact that they maintained their cultic identity through centuries, or that Egyptian villages did the same?

Jewish communities of Ptolemaic origin offer a mixed pattern. In the mid-third century BC, the Jewish settlement of the village of Trikomia in the Fayum has the typical profile of third-generation immigrants: the high proportion and variety of Hebrew names born as patronymics by those of the elder generation contrast with the far superior number of Greek names characterizing the younger one (Clarysse 1994; Honigman 2009, pp. 129–131). In the first half of the first century AD, a list of taxpayers in the Fayum offers similar characteristics of newcomers, showing that immigration from Judea continued in Roman times (Honigman 2011, pp. 141–143). Strikingly, only two Hebrew names (Iakoubis and Iona) are recorded in the papyri of the *politeuma* of the Jews of Herakleopolis in the mid-second century BC, confirming that there is not necessarily a connection between Greek names and cultural “assimilation” (Honigman 2009, p. 126). In contrast, the Jewish settlement of Leontopolis, which was also organized around a *politeuma* from the late second century BC into the first century AD, continued to use mixed Greek and Hebrew names (Honigman 2009, p. 124). In all these settlements, a high proportion of the Greek names are either translations of or phonetic equivalents to Hebrew names (e.g. Dositheos and Theodotos, which may be Greek renderings of Ionathas and Eirene, the Greek equivalent for Shelomshon).

That said, the fact that Hebrew names are found in the documentary evidence down to AD 115–117 cannot be explained by continued immigration alone. The narrow, almost standardized pool of names that were in use in numerous settlements, and the outstanding popularity of names evoking central biblical characters (e.g. Joseph and Isaac), are hints that the Jewish communities settled in Egypt developed a genuinely distinct name-giving praxis, as compared to both their immediate environment and Judea (Honigman 2016, pp. 34–39).

The picture is even less clear-cut when we consider ethnic labels. Whereas *ethnika* are considered to be reliable markers of actual ethnicity in the third century BC (Thompson 2011b), in administrative documents of later Ptolemaic times they tended to connote occupation and legal status rather than ethnic affiliation (see Chapter 19). In private documents they were rarer, and seem to reflect ethnicity throughout, including in Roman times. The fact that, in contrast with all other ethnic labels, the *ethnikon* of *Ioudaios/Ioudaioi* (Jew/Jews) remained relatively well documented through AD 115 is noteworthy.

However, the use of *ethnika* for administrative purposes in Ptolemaic times raises intriguing questions. From the standpoint of the Ptolemaic administration, the main divide was between the native “Egyptian” population, whose members were identified through their local place of settlement, and (descendants of) immigrants, who were identified by means of ethnic labels referencing a place of origin outside Egypt. A second distinction obtained between military settlers and civilians. In contrast, for administrative purposes at least, no difference was made between individuals and groups from the Greek world and from elsewhere. The Jews of Trikomia exhibited the collective label of “Greeks,” meaning a tax-privileged group (Clarysse and Thompson 2006, 2, pp. 138–147). Given their status, did these Jews feel they were a “minority,” in the sense of being “weak”?

Ethnic labels and personal names allow us to spot individuals and groups. To identify communities (i.e. groups endowed with an institutionalized organization), additional indicia are usually necessary (Thompson 2011b, pp. 106–109). Of all documented institutional settings, the *politeuma* has drawn particular attention.

20.3 The Ptolemaic *Politeumata*

In Ptolemaic Egypt, the word *politeuma* denotes a certain type of communal structure associated with groups of foreigners: for instance, Cilicians and Cretans in the Fayum; Boeotians in Xoïs in the Delta; and Idumeans in Memphis and Hermopolis Magna. *Politeumata* of Jews existed in Alexandria, Leontopolis, several cities of the Delta, and Herakleopolis in Middle Egypt (Cowey and Maresch 2001, pp. 4–9; Méléze Modrzejewski in Keenan et al. 2014, pp. 477–482; Sängér 2013, pp. 53–56). More precisely, as Thompson cogently argued (1984, 2011b, pp. 109–113), Ptolemaic *politeumata* were associations formed of soldiers, particularly elite troops, and their families, which were created by Ptolemy VI Philometor (180–145 BC) as an alternative to the system of cleruchies that had existed since Ptolemy son of Lagus. The cleruchic system, by which soldiers received land allotments in exchange for their military service, had proved remarkably effective in ensuring the soldiers' loyalty to their employer. When pressure on land grew, however, Ptolemy VI replaced it with a system whereby ethnically homogeneous military units were allowed to form ethnic corporate structures together with their family members. Following the Roman conquest, the *politeumata* lost their military function, although they continued to exist until the second century AD, presumably as cultic associations.

Unfortunately, the internal life of a *politeuma* remains poorly documented, as the archive of papyri dating to the years 144–132 BC and relating to a “*politeuma* of the Jews in Herakleopolis” is the only source to cast light on this matter (Cowey and Maresch 2001). Similarly, the question whether *politeumata*, like *poleis*, had legal autonomy remains controversial (compare Honigman 2003; Kruse 2010; Kugler 2011; Thompson 2011b; Fischer-Bovet 2014, pp. 293–294; Czajkowski and Wackénier n.d.). Whatever the case, in Ptolemaic times they were granted freedom of action to follow their ancestral traditions in many spheres (Thompson 2011b, pp. 110–113). In particular, they could build their own shrines: the Idumeans of Memphis and Hermopolis Magna built temples to Apollo-Qos, in which they performed their cultic traditions, using their ancestral language well into the second century AD (Thompson 1984, 2012, pp. 92–98); several Jewish communities from the Delta, in all likelihood *politeumata*, dedicated “houses of prayer” (*proseuchai*) to the royal families of their day (inscriptions JIGRE nos. 24, 25, 27–28, 105, 125); and in Leontopolis, they built a temple under the leadership of the exiled high priest Onias IV (Josephus, *Antiquitates Judaicae* 13.62–73).

The board of officials of the *politeuma* of Jews in Herakleopolis held a court, acting as arbitrators in legal matters. In particular, they had powers internally to enforce rights stemming from legal contracts. In several complaints (P.Polit.Jud. 3, 9 and 12), the plaintiffs mention the fact that the business transactions in which they were wronged were backed by an “ancestral oath,” referring to the Jews' ancestral law, the Torah (Thompson

2011b, p. 112). Intriguingly, however, in business transactions, the actual legal praxis of these Jews followed the common Ptolemaic law of their time, which was a blend of Greek and Egyptian legal traditions (Cowey and Maresch 2001; Kugler 2011; Thompson 2011b, pp. 109–113; Czajkowski and Wackenier n.d.). In contrast, in family matters, they genuinely followed Jewish law, as is shown by P.Polit.Jud. 4, a complaint by Philotas son of Philotas, a member of the Herakleopolis *politeuma*, about the break of a marriage promise: “Lysimachos, the ... father had promised by oath to give Nikaia to me along with the dowry laid down for her ... Not long afterwards, Lysimachos ... joined Nikaia to another man before receiving from me the customary bill of divorce (*biblion apostasiou*)” (translation by Méléze Modrzejewski in Keenan et al. 2014, no. 10.2.3; see also Kirster 2002; Méléze Modrzejewski 2006; Kugler 2011; Czajkowski and Wackenier n.d.). Philotas here refers to the two stages of Jewish marriage, often separated by a long period: the *qiddushin* (legal engagement, including a dowry, which can only be dissolved by death or divorce) and *nissui’in* (fully-fledged marriage, the couple now living together).

The Ptolemaic *politeumata* prompt two main observations. First, they compel us to refine the notion of ethnic minority communities: on the one hand, there is no evidence that all settlements of non-Greek foreigners were organized as *politeumata* from the time of Ptolemy VI onward – it appears that only those that had military troops at their core were; on the other, there also were *politeumata* of Greek (sub-)ethnic groups (one of Cretans and one of Boeotians). Consequently, it appears that the Ptolemies apprehended “groups” at the level of the local close-knit community, and did not relate to ethnic groups (in our sense) as homogeneous entities to be treated in the same way throughout the country. This is in marked contrast with Roman practice (see later). Second, the form of organization that was conceded to *politeumata* (community leaders, separate places of settlement, separate shrines, legal privileges) was equally granted to other occupational and professional groups, including for instance Egyptian priests (Thompson 2011b, pp. 106–108). Decidedly, the category of ethnic minority group did not make much sense to the Ptolemaic state culture.

20.4 Temples and *Proseuchai*

Another clue to the existence of organized communities is the presence of cultic places. Betokening stable settlement, they contributed to the maintenance of distinct cults and cultic practices over lengthy periods of time. This was true not only for Jews, but for Idumeans and Syrians as well (Honigman 2016, pp. 39–42). However, Jews distinguished themselves in that they coined an exclusive word, *proseuche*, to refer to their cultic places. Literally, *proseuche* means “house of prayer,” implicitly excluding sacrifices. Although the relationship between *proseuchai* and the later institution of the synagogue is disputed, the Jews of Egypt – in all likelihood, those of Alexandria – were the first to create communal institutions that offered an alternative to sacrificial cult in the Jerusalem temple. The earliest *proseuchai* attested date to the reign of Ptolemy III Euergetes (246–221 BC), but the fact that one of them was located in Schedia, a small city of the Delta (JIGRE 22), makes it plausible that the first *proseuche* was actually created at an earlier time, in Alexandria, and its model subsequently reproduced in smaller communities.

20.5 The Jews in Roman Times

As Roman legions began to set up quarters in Egypt, the Ptolemaic garrisons were dismantled, and the *politeumata* lost their military function (Gambetti 2009, p. 59). Moreover, following the Roman conquest, Augustus effected a wholesale reform of personal statuses in Egypt. The use of ethnic labels to identify “Greeks” was abolished, and the population was divided into three tax categories: the citizens of the three (later four) *poleis*; a class of urban elites in the nomes’ capitals, paying the poll tax (*laographia*) at a lower rate; and “Egyptians,” who were liable to a full tax rate (see Chapter 18). With the abolition of administrative *ethnika*, and given that ethnic groups had long since relinquished epichoric names, we lose our main source of evidence to identify ethnic minorities, with the notable exception of Jews. Thanks to this and the available literary sources, Jews are the only ethnic minority whose history can be written in imperial times.

This history is strikingly different from that of Ptolemaic times. Under the Ptolemies, the presence of numerous Jewish communities was seemingly largely related to the employment of Jews as military troops, first as units of cleruchs, and later as *politeumata*. According to Josephus, Jewish generals were involved in the war between Ptolemy VI/Cleopatra and Ptolemy VIII (*Antiquitates Judaicae* 13.285–287), and at the time of the Roman war in Alexandria, the Jewish troops of Alexandria and the Delta supported Julius Caesar (Josephus, *Contra Apionem* 2.61; Gambetti 2009, pp. 52–55). Consequently, the dismantling of the Ptolemaic garrisons under Augustus entailed dramatic changes in the condition of the Jews, as did his reform of personal statuses and the fact that the Romans treated the Jews as a homogeneous ethnic group. Under Roman rule, the concept of ethnic minority became pertinent (Honigman 2016).

20.5.1 The Jews in Alexandria

The dramatic consequences of these changes were particularly felt in Alexandria. We may reasonably presume that the existence of an organized community of Jews there antedated the construction of the Schedia *prosenche* under Ptolemy III (246–221 BC). The first Jews to settle in Alexandria were not citizens, but *katoikoi*, military settlers belonging to the city’s garrison, and it is plausible that they occupied a separate quarter (Gambetti 2009, pp. 39–42). The *Letter of Aristeas* 310 is evidence that a *politeuma* of Jews existed in Alexandria at the time of its redaction in the mid- to late second century BC, but the relation of the *politeuma* with the original *katoikoi* is unclear. Presumably, the presence of Jews in the city steadily increased through continued immigration, and Philo claims that in AD 38 Jews occupied two of the five quarters, and also lived in the other three (*In Flaccum* 55; Gambetti 2009, pp. 50–51).

In the first decades of Roman domination, the Jews of Alexandria seemingly enjoyed the privileged status of *katoikoi*, in the sense of “residents,” whereby they were exempt from the *laographia*. Similarly, the *politeuma* preserved its organization. Strabo describes the *ethnarches* who stood at its head as “govern[ing] the people and adjudicat[ing] suits and supervis[ing] contracts and ordinances, just as if he were the head of a sovereign state” (Strabo in Josephus, *Antiquitates Judaicae* 14.117; cf. Honigman 2003, pp. 72–73). This shows that by this time, his powers were still very similar to those of the

officials of the Herakleopolis *politeuma* one century earlier. However, following an overall census of the province's population carried out in 11/10 BC, the prefect Gallus ordered a revision of the list of those who were exempted from the poll tax. It seems that on this occasion, the Alexandrian Jews were demoted from the privileged status of *katoikoi* to that of "Egyptians," denoting the fiscal category of those liable to the full-rate tax (Gambetti 2009, pp. 59–66). Moreover, in AD 11/12, Augustus abolished the office of *ethnarches* (Smallwood 1999, pp. 180–181).

20.5.2 *The Riots of AD 38 in Alexandria*

Three decades later, in the late summer of AD 38, the Jews were massacred by the Alexandrian population, their *proseuchai* burned or demolished, and the survivors compelled to leave their homes throughout the city and confined to the district that used to be allotted to the original Jewish garrison. Members of the board of Elders that headed the Jewish *politeuma* were arrested and scourged publically in the theater – a degrading punishment reserved for members of the lower class of Egyptians – while other Jews were tortured and hanged during games celebrating the emperor's birthday (Smallwood 1999, pp. 182–183). While both the Jews and the Greeks sent separate embassies to Rome to plead their cases before Caligula, at the emperor's death the Jews retaliated, massacring Greeks and attacking temples in the city (Josephus, *Antiquitates Judaicae* 19.278; Smallwood 1999, p. 184).

Despite Philo's two detailed accounts of the atrocities that were perpetrated against the Jews in *In Flaccum* and *Legatio*, both their structural causes and their immediate trigger remain a matter of conjecture, due to Philo's patent unreliability (Gambetti 2009, pp. 13–21). Nonetheless, there seems to be a structural connection between the explosion of violence in AD 38 and the efforts of the Jews to recover their former privileged legal and fiscal status following their demotion under the prefect Gallus (Mélèze Modrzejewski 1997a; Smallwood 1999; Kerkeslager 2009; Gambetti 2009). The open conflict was eventually settled by Claudius, who in the spring of 41 issued an edict to the Alexandrians, by which he reconfirmed the status that the Jews had enjoyed under Augustus, that is, deriving from Gallus' reform. While the Jews had to pay the full-rate tax, they recovered their right to live in the city and to uphold their own worship and customs (Claudius' Letter to the Alexandrians, P.Lond. VI 1912 verso; Honigman 2003, p. 88). According to Josephus, Tiberius subsequently issued a general edict, granting the Jews throughout the empire the same rights as those they enjoyed in Alexandria (*Antiquitates Judaicae* 19.286–292; Smallwood 1999, p. 184). Thus, in contrast with Ptolemaic practice, the Jews were now treated as a single group, not only throughout Egypt, but all across the empire.

20.5.3 *Jews in the Chora*

Whereas Philo and Josephus repeatedly emphasize the hostility of the population of Egypt toward Jews, documentary evidence from the Fayum suggests matters were otherwise. In the first and second centuries AD, the personal names of Sambathion and Sambas, which derive from "Sabbath," became popular in Greco-Egyptian circles. In all likelihood, the reason for this was the fact that the Sabbath had come to be revered as a goddess in non-Jewish cultic associations, perhaps because magical powers were associated with it.

Moreover, the fact that these names fell into disuse in the second century – presumably in response to the Jewish Revolt of AD 115–117 – shows that the connection between the name, the Sabbath, and the Jews had never been lost. But, if the reason why the names were discarded is correct, it follows, first, that before the revolt of 115–117, hostility toward Jews was a specifically Alexandrian phenomenon (Honigman 2016, pp. 39–42), and second, that the punishing steps imposed by the Roman administration on Jews after the revolt of 66–73 did not reflect popular sentiment, at least in the Fayum.

20.5.4 From the Judean Revolt of AD 66–73 to the Jewish Revolt of Egypt and Cyrenaica in AD 115–117

The failed Judean Revolt of AD 66–73, put down by Titus, entailed harsh repercussions for Egyptian Jews. Insurgents and refugees fled to Egypt, triggering military operations and the killing of tens of thousands of Jews in Alexandria and throughout Egypt (Kerkeslager 2006, pp. 57). The temple of Leontopolis was closed, and Vespasian imposed a special tax on Jews throughout the empire (Josephus, *Bellum Judaicum* 7.218; Cassius Dio 66.7.2), known as the “Jewish tax.” This officially replaced the contribution of one-half shekel that Jews living in and outside Judea paid annually to the Jerusalem temple before its destruction in AD 70. However, while the original contribution was paid only by men between the ages of 20 and 50 on a voluntary basis, the “Jewish tax” was imposed on all men, women, and children. As an additional humiliation, it was aimed at the reconstruction of the temple of Capitoline Jupiter in Rome, which had been damaged during the civil war of AD 68.

The payment of the Jewish tax, which is attested by tax receipts from Edfu and a recapitulative tax roll from the Fayum, was exacted with particular harshness. Thus, although it was levied for the first time in AD 71/2, it was extended with retroactive effect to the previous year. Double levies making up for gaps recurred subsequently, and in AD 92/3, 10 years were exacted at once, inducing a tremendous financial burden on taxpayers (Honigman 2011, p. 164). This was only one aspect of the economic pressures that befell Egyptian Jews in the aftermath of the Judean revolt. In Arsinoe-Ptolemais, the Fayum’s capital, two “houses of prayer” paid fees for water supply at a disproportionately high rate (more than the baths and the brewery together), suggesting discriminatory treatment (Honigman 2011, p. 163).

Owing to these demographic and economic upheavals, alongside the hostile environment of Alexandria, the wealth and prestige of the traditional elite Jewish families were shattered, prompting the emergence of new leaders, while apocalypticism spread in all social classes of the Jewish population throughout the country and in neighboring Cyrenaica (Kerkeslager 2006, pp. 55–59). When Roman troops were diverted to Mesopotamia to support Trajan’s war against the Parthians, the Jews of Cyrenaica burst out in revolt, and they were soon joined by those of Egypt and Cyprus (for Egypt, see Box 20.1). The rebels attacked Greek temples and buildings that embodied civic and imperial institutions (Kerkeslager 2006, pp. 59–62).

As documentary evidence shows, repression was reckless. Vast tracts of confiscated lands imply that the Jewish elite families of Alexandria had perished or been executed (Mélèze Modrzejewski 1997a, pp. 176–181; Kerkeslager 2006, p. 62). Most Jewish communities documented before the revolt summarily vanish from the evidence, and the impression is

Box 20.1 The Jewish Revolt of AD 115–117 and the Nome Governor Apollonios.

by Katelijn Vandorpe and Willy Clarysse

The archive of Apollonios, *strategos* of the Apollonopolite Heptakomia nome in Middle Egypt, is well known for its private letters from women worrying about his health and safety during the harsh Jewish rebellion of the early second century (for translations and discussion of these letters, see Rowlandson 1998, pp. 118–124; Bagnall and Cribiore 2006, pp. 139–163; Lewis 1983). Here, we focus on documents of the archive that also illustrate the impact of the rebellion on the life and property of an elite member from Hermopolis (for the chronology of events, compare Fuks in C.Pap. Jud. II; see also Schwartz 1962, Applebaum 1979; Pucci Ben Zeev 2005).

115	Rutilius Lupus: prefect of Egypt from January 28, 113 to at least January 5, 117	
June 19, ?115	Jewish rebellion: phase of <i>stasis</i> or riots , e.g. in Alexandria (Eusebius, <i>Historia Ecclesiastica</i> 4.2)	P.Giss. 47
116 and early 117	Apollonios buys arms in Koptos in the south	
	Jewish rebellion: phase of <i>polemos</i> or war .	
	General Marcus Turbo is sent to Egypt.	
	Invasion of Jews from Cyrene in Egypt; Greeks fly to Alexandria where they murder Jews; the Egyptian <i>chora</i> remains unsafe for some time, ravaged by the Jews under the leadership of Lucuas (Cassius Dio 68–69; Eusebius, <i>Historia Ecclesiastica</i> 4.2). For the mobilization of military forces, see ChLA XI 500. A list of casualties in the legions XXII <i>Deiotariana</i> and III <i>Cyrenaica</i> may arguably be attributed to the period of the Jewish revolt (cf. Kramer 1993)	
?April/June 116	Hermopolis is in the “uttermost danger.”	SB X 10277
c. June 30, ?116	Women (and children) should be taken to safety	
	Apollonios is away from home during the “unrest.”	C.Pap.Jud. II
	His mother Eudaimonis expresses her worries in two letters, praying for him day and night	437 and
		P.Alex.Giss. 58
August/ September ?116	Apollonios is at home (Hermopolis) for the New Years days, but is suddenly called back to Heptakomia; his wife Aline is worried and can hardly eat anything on New Year’s day	C.Pap.Jud. II 436
November 7, 116	Security guards are assigned a specific patrol area of the <i>metropolis</i> of the Heptakomia	P.Brem. 23
?early 117	Hermopolis is in trouble, as its “forces fought and were beaten and many of them were killed,” but a legion of the prefect Rutilius Lupus has arrived at Memphis and is coming to help	C.Pap.Jud. II 438
?spring 117	A slave of Apollonios, who comes from Memphis, brings the good news of his master’s victory	C.Pap.Jud. II 439

July 16, ?117	It is safe enough for Apollonios' wife Aline to travel to her husband in Heptakomia, where she will give birth. Her mother-in-law Eudaimonis hopes it will be a boy; she has temporarily taken over the management of Aline's weaver's atelier and has some troubles with finding employees. She complains about money and has "the vision of being naked when winter starts"	C.Pap.Jud. II 442
August 117	Death of Trajan and accession of Hadrian; Egypt is pacified. Rammius Martialis: prefect of Egypt from August 117 to June 119 As governor, Apollonios celebrates Hadrian's accession with the "people" (<i>demos</i>) of the Heptakomia. The prologue to a play found among Apollonios' papers has: "so let us sacrifice and kindle the altars, let us relax with festive laughter, with drunkenness from a [wine] fountain, with sport events in the gymnasium. All this is supplied by our governor out of loyalty to the emperor and out of generosity toward us"	LDAB 4688
end August 117	The prefect of Egypt is about to leave for the <i>conventus</i> in Memphis	P.Brem. 16
November 28, 117	Already for the second time, Apollonios requests the prefect Rammius Martialis for leave: he has been absent from home for a long time and his possessions need his attention "because of the attack of the impious Jews"	C.Pap.Jud. II 443
January 10, 118	Apollonios is at work, and it is business as usual: farmers are entitled to a tax reduction as promised by the emperor Hadrian after the crisis	Sel.Pap. II 354
August 29, ?118	War damage is to be repaired: a luxurious dwelling of Apollonios needs reparations (e.g. the woodwork of the shrines and the guest house). The area of Hermopolis is devastated and is difficult to travel through.	C.Pap.Jud. II 446

that all organized Jewish life was annihilated for more than a century, suggesting that there was neither demographic nor cultural continuity between the old Jewish communities and the Egyptian Christians of the third century AD (Kerkeslager 2006, pp. 63–68; Honigman 2011, p. 167). As *Ioudaios* had become a pejorative ethnic label, it was largely replaced by *Hebreos* in Late Antiquity.

20.5.5 *The End of the Jewish Community of Edfu*

This ghastly demise is mirrored in the fate of the community of Edfu, which may be reconstructed from documentary evidence. Originating in a military colony of Persian times, like in Elephantine, this community retained its pre-Hellenistic communal

institutions at least through the mid-second century BC, which included scribes writing in Aramaic, judges, and priests – and, hence, a temple (Honigman 2009, pp. 119–122). Aramaic remained its spoken language at least until Tiberius (Honigman 2011, pp. 144–145, cf. Clarysse 2002), and probably through AD 115–117, since Hebrew and Aramaic personal names were used till the very end, as receipts for the Jewish tax from Edfu attest (Honigman 2011, pp. 143–145). By the late first century AD, the Jews of Edfu observed the Sabbath rest (Clarysse et al. 2010) and may have celebrated a festival very much resembling the Tabernacle festival (Honigman 2011, pp. 145–146). After AD 117, they vanish from the evidence.

20.6 Conclusion

The Jews of Egypt are the only community of the Greco-Roman diaspora whose history may be told with such detail, particularly for Hellenistic times. The wealth of documentary evidence – papyri, ostraca, and inscriptions – is exceptional, and even more so is the availability of comparative material from other ethnic minority groups in reference to Ptolemaic times.

FURTHER READING

On ethnic minorities, Thompson (2011b) is an excellent introduction. On *politeumata*, see Sängers (2013) and Czajkowski and Wackenier (n.d.). Fischer-Bovet (2014), Clarysse and Thompson (2006, 2, pp. 123–205), and Thompson (2012, pp. 76–98) bear on specific topics and places. Rajak (2009) includes a fine survey of the Jewish diaspora, with emphasis on Egypt. Méléze Modrzejewski (1997a) is a highly readable introduction. On Ptolemaic times, Hegermann (1989, pp. 131–145) is primarily based on literary sources, whereas Honigman (2009; 2016) and Sängers (2013) use documentary ones. Some significant papyri dealing with Ptolemaic *politeumata* are discussed and translated by Méléze Modrzejewski in Keenan et al. (2014, pp. 477–482). On Jews in Roman Egypt, Honigman (2011; 2016) spotlights various issues, based on documentary evidence. On the Alexandrian events of AD 38–41, Gambetti (2009) offers a careful reappraisal of the evidence (see also Kerkeslager 2009). A shorter introduction is Smallwood (1999, pp. 179–187). Kerkeslager (2006) is an excellent survey of the period of AD 66–235.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

Family and Life Cycle Transitions

Jane Rowlandson and Sandra Lippert

21.1 Family and Household

The word “family” is habitually used in two senses: for a group of persons living together as a single household, which may include people unrelated by blood or marriage, such as long-standing servants or nannies, and for the wider group of relatives, including those who reside elsewhere. While it is conceptually useful to distinguish strictly between “household” and “family” (Nevett 2011), ancient usage commonly also treated them as essentially equivalent. The orphan Didyme spoke of living with her two maternal uncles in Oxyrhynchos “as one household (*oikos*) and one family (*syngeneia*)” (ἐνὸς ὅντος οἴκου καὶ μιᾶς συγγενείας), her grandfather’s house and its contents remaining undivided, including the slaves (P.Oxy. XXXIV 2713, c. AD 297). Didyme’s co-residence with her uncles in an extended family was not untypical of Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt, although had she not been orphaned, the extended family would much more probably have been her father’s ancestral home, not that of her mother. Equally characteristic was the depletion of her family by mortality, since life expectancy at birth was less than 25 years. Ancient families were a patchwork shaped by the attrition of disease, maternal death, and divorce. The presence of slaves was also normal for a well-off urban household of Roman Egypt, although rarer in villages. Slaves were an integral part of the Greek *oikos* or Roman *domus*, and from a marginal role in pharaonic Egyptian society their numbers progressively increased during the Ptolemaic and Early Roman Periods (see Chapter 18). To some extent, domestic slaves could fill gaps created by the death, incapacity, or absence of family members; many were born and reared in the household (*oikogeneis*), and some undoubtedly were natural offspring of their master or his sons, although this was seldom formally acknowledged. Therefore, this chapter does not distinguish sharply between family and

household; while those linked by close blood or marriage relationships formed the core of a family's identity, we should also consider everyone, both kin and non-kin, who shared the intimate proximity of the household.

In fact, our best guide to family composition comes from the household census records surviving from Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt, mostly (like the papyri generally) from the Arsinoite and Oxyrhynchite nomes of Middle Egypt. These suggest that throughout both periods, although simple conjugal families were numerically most common, the normal practice was for newlyweds, rather than setting up a new household, to live with the husband's family in a multiple household (i.e. comprising more than one married couple), which the vagaries of mortality eroded into the variety of forms manifested in the data (Huebner 2013, pp. 31–57). The Ptolemaic census registers (later third century BC) show some significant differences between Greek and Egyptian households, although the heavy preponderance of Egyptian over Greek multiple households, which has been attributed to cultural difference (Huebner 2013, p. 45), may largely be a quirk of the evidence (Clarysse and Thompson 2006, 2, p. 254). The Greek households recorded fewer females than Egyptian ones, either through underreporting or perhaps because they practiced infant exposure, which was common in the Greek world but alien to Egyptian custom. Many of the surprisingly high proportion of single-adult families (around 30% of Greek and 10% of Egyptian families), especially those headed by women, no doubt included children (not listed in the registers, since they did not pay tax), and were originally conjugal families eroded by a spouse's death or divorce. The larger average size of Greek households is explained mainly by the co-residence of non-kin dependents such as nurses, agricultural workers, and slaves. Very few Egyptian families possessed slaves; slave-owning was essentially restricted to the wealthiest Greek military families, and only 3.8% of the listed population was slaves – mostly female (Clarysse and Thompson 2006, 2, pp. 262–284).

The Roman census data come from some 300 individual household census returns spanning the early first to mid-third century AD, of which 167 provide information on family structure. This evidence underrepresents both the poorest and the richest social levels (notably absent are Alexandrian and Roman citizens, who were exempt from poll tax), and it is biased toward the *metropoleis*, although in reality between two-thirds and three-quarters of the population lived in villages. A large majority of urban families (68%) comprised solitaires or conjugal units, and only 26% were extended or multiple, in contrast to 43% of village families. However, although nearly two-thirds of villagers resided in extended or multiple families, the greater presence of lodgers and slaves raised the average urban household size above that for village households (5.31 : 4.82 persons, Bagnall and Frier 2006, pp. 66–69; contrast the overwhelming predominance of simple conjugal households in P.Oxy.Census, a register from Lykopolis farther south for the AD 89 census; cf. Clarysse and Thompson 2006, 2, pp. 257–258). The different shape of urban and rural households probably also reflects the migration of young men into the towns, more cramped living conditions (except among the wealthiest families), and higher urban mortality (Bagnall and Frier 2006, pp. 160–169; Scheidel 2001, pp. 118–180).

Despite the popularity of multiple households, only 15% of the census families span three generations, because relatively few people survived beyond middle age; only 4% of those reported are aged 60 or over. While most elderly lived with their sons (or, more

rarely, a daughter), and elderly men with adult sons often remained the household head, the hazards of fate left some elderly individuals or conjugal couples without the support of close kin. For anyone sufficiently wealthy to afford them, a slave's care and companionship could substitute for the absence of kin, leading to close ties of affection. One lone woman from Oxyrhynchos claimed that she "loved and cherished as a daughter" the home-bred slave girl whom she sent for music lessons (chaperoned by another servant, a freedwoman), intending her to be her nurse in old age. A childless married couple had actually freed and adopted their slave girl, apparently giving her a valuable plot of land before her marriage, as they might do for a biological daughter (P.Oxy. L 3555, III 504; cf. Huebner 2013, pp. 107–140, 162–198).

Extended and multiple households were the consequence of Egyptian inheritance law, which divided parents' property virtually between all the children, with paternal and maternal inheritance being passed on separately, and the eldest son receiving a double share if his father died intestate (details in Lippert 2013). While the younger siblings were underage, they continued to live in the family home, the eldest brother acting as family head and administering the property as a whole; but on coming of age, they could demand the handing over of their shares. Depending on the kind of property, its size, and the number of shareholders, different solutions were possible: if the shares were impracticably small (e.g. 1/10 of a small house), the co-heirs could jointly rent them out and share the profit, one of them could buy out the others, or they could jointly sell to a third party. If, on the other hand, the size of the shares allowed it, houses, building plots, and fields were split physically into separate lots. Houses thus divided consisted of several "flats" for the different couples, but could conserve areas in joint use, and thus were still considered single houses for census purposes. In third-century BC Hawara, two brothers shared their late father's house, one living in the southern and the other in the northern half, while the stairs and entrance doors were used by both (P.Chic.Haw. 63–70). In early Roman Dime, eight siblings inherited from their father a house with surrounding building plots and, in another part of the village, two adjacent houses. They initially decided to allot the house and plots without further subdivision to the four brothers, and the other two houses to the four sisters, with two sisters sharing each (P.Vienna inv. D 6937: Lippert and Schentuleit 2010a, pp. 421–423). The brothers eventually divided their common plot and created in effect four terraced houses, with access to the farther ones through the individual courtyards to the north. About 25 years after their father's death, one younger brother started enlarging his living space by buying shares of the neighboring house across the yard (Lippert and Schentuleit 2010a, pp. 335–337, 350–351). These examples show that brothers were likely to continue living close to one another even when they each had their own families, but that, when possible, they preferred individual homes over sharing a single house.

A Demotic letter of the second half of the second century AD (P.Berlin inv. P 8092; Lippert and Schentuleit 2010b) gives a glimpse of family life. The writer primarily addresses his father, but includes his wife, his mother, two sisters, his daughter, and her son in his greetings. One has the impression that all these persons are living together in the same house, but they might, of course, just be seeing the addressee on a regular basis. The omission of the sisters' husbands from the greeting could indicate that they were widowed or divorced, or simply that the writer did not care much for his brothers-in-law; similarly,

his daughter, whose husband is also not mentioned, might have returned to live with her son at her grandfather's place when her husband died or separated from her.

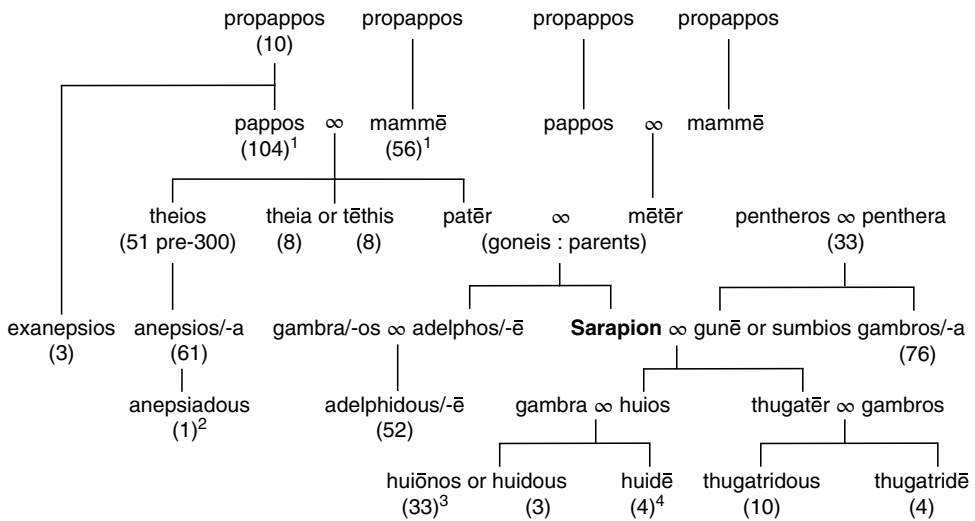
21.2 Family Relationships

21.2.1 Kinship

As in earlier periods, Demotic kinship terms are very basic, denoting only close ascending (father, mother), descending (son, daughter), and lateral (brother, sister) blood relatives; these could be used to denote other grades of blood relationship either by combination (e.g. “father’s sister” for “aunt,” “mother’s father” for “maternal grandfather”) or by extension (e.g. “father” for “grandfather,” “great-grandfather,” etc.; “brother” for “uncle” and “cousin”). There were, of course, special terms for “husband” and “wife.” Relations by marriage were “male in-law” and “female in-law,” without distinction of the grade – the same word was used for “father-in-law” as for “son-in-law” (Lippert and Schentuleit 2004, p. 295). For more precision, genitive constructions (“father of the wife,” etc.) would have to be used again. No Demotic terms of endearment for relatives appear in the documents, but this does not mean they were not used in daily life. As in most cultures, they were likely derived from children’s language and thus considered inappropriate for written “adult” language, where parents are always addressed as “my father” or “my mother,” siblings as “my brother” or “my sister” (cf. P.Berlin inv. P 8092, ll. 3–4, 19, 22; Lippert and Schentuleit 2010b, pp. 357–360).

The Greek language, in contrast, employed a rich vocabulary of kin terms, most appearing in the papyri and other texts from Egypt, especially from the Roman Period onward (Figure 21.1). Although papyri rarely use the distinct terms “father’s brother” (*patros*, πατήρ) and “mother’s brother” (*metros*, μήτρως), uncles and aunts were regularly designated “on the father’s/mother’s side” (*pros patros/metros*), as were grandparents and, less commonly, cousins. This reflects the importance of the maternal line, not only in property transmission, but increasingly from the Early Roman Period onward in the definition and perpetuation of family status (Depauw 2010). Almost all papyrus references to cousins, nephews, and nieces come from formal documents concerning inheritance or joint property ownership, or denote the male *kyrios* (“guardian”) of a female relative. If possible, a woman’s father, brother, husband, or son would be her *kyrios*, so the use of these remoter relatives (or the unspecific *syngenes*, “kinsman”) normally indicates that she lacked closer adult kin (except if the closer relative was the other party to the transaction and so excluded from acting for her).

Apart from “grandmother,” Greek private letters rarely use kin-terms beyond one degree of relationship (“father,” “brother,” “son,” etc.; and these often had a non-literal, extended sense: Dickey 2004), although the numerous people greeted by name in letters surely sometimes included cousins and other collateral kin (examples in Bagnall and Cribiore 2006). The pattern of reference to “in-law” relationships is, however, quite different, with private letters contributing many of the relatively few pre-AD 300 uses of *gambros/gambra* (“brother/sister-in-law” or other in-laws: 14/39 pre-300) and *pentheros/penthera* (“father/mother-in-law”: 5/7 pre-300). Although letters were often dictated to a scribe, they reflect everyday speech more closely than do legal or bureaucratic documents.



Bracketed figures refer to the number of hits for the word in the Duke Databank (DDbDP)

¹ Including adjectival forms.

² P.Köln XIV 575; also used in inscriptions from Egypt. The papyri normally use periphrasis (P.Oxy. III 492: "the son of her cousin").

³ Mostly refers to son's son; also unspecific and once to daughter's son (P.Vind.Tand. 27).

⁴ Also in PSI XII 1263 used as synonym for thugatridē.

Figure 21.1 Greek kinship terms used in Egypt. Source: courtesy Jane Rowlandson.

The word "*mama*" used occasionally in letters, often understood as an "infantile" variant of *mamme* (P.Mich. VIII 465–6; P.Oxy. LIX 4001) but translated "nurse" by Bagnall and Cribiore (2006, p. 229, 283; cf. Bradley 1991), could probably have either sense depending on the individual attachment of the writer. Theocritus' depiction of Syracusan women in Ptolemaic Alexandria (*Idyll* 15) parodies their use of baby speech, including "daddy," but this is rarely found in the papyri (SB VIII 9882: ἀπαίετε σὲ ἀμμάς Θαυβάρην καὶ ἄππας Δῖος, "Granny Thaubarion and Grandpa Dios send you greetings"; cf. P.Giss.Apoll. 17: κα[ὶ ὁ] παπ[ας] [α]ὐτῇ[ς]).

The non-literal use of kin terms in family letters to express bonds of affection or respect (as opposed to collegiality or hierarchy in business letters) is best illustrated by the family correspondence of Apollonios the *strategos* (see Box 20.1). Apollonios' mother Eudaimonis addressed his wife Aline as "daughter" and referred to her as Apollonios' sister, although Aline and Apollonios were not biological siblings; they also spoke of one another as brother and sister. Aline addressed Tetes, probably a respected servant, as "mother." An old family friend, Arsis, called Apollonios her "son," while her actual son Chairemon addressed him as "child" (Bagnall and Cribiore 2006; Dickey 2004; TM Arch 19).

Tacoma (2006, pp. 235–237) claims that the elaborate kin terminology found in some second- and third-century north-western Delta inscriptions memorializing office-holding relatives extending to four generations and second cousins is scarcely paralleled elsewhere in Egypt. The contemporary papyri do, however, show a similarly precise recognition of

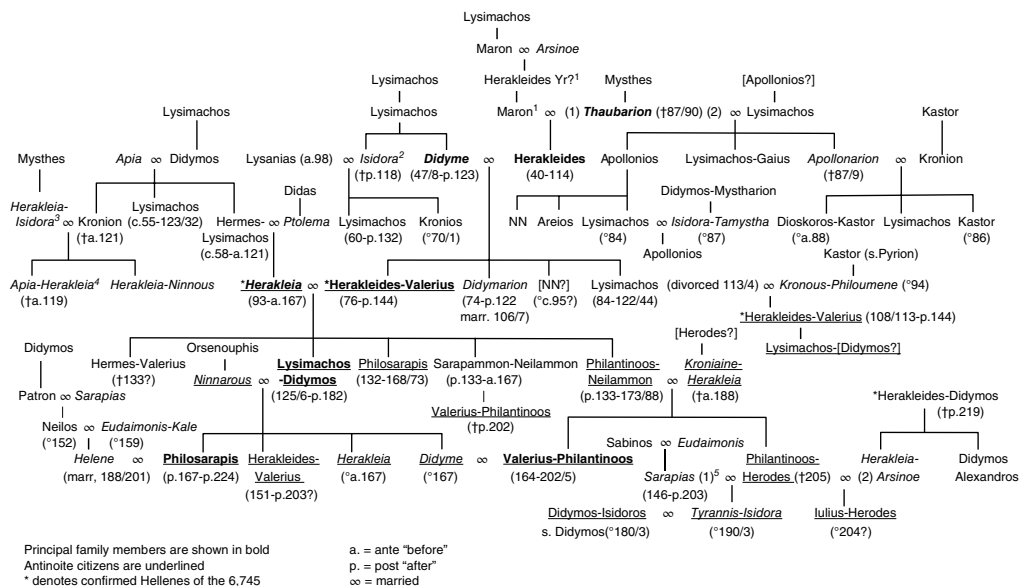
family relationships when the context demands it. Only direct ascent (both paternal and maternal) was relevant when the claimants of gymnasial status at Oxyrhynchos and Hermopolis cited ancestries extending back up to nine generations to membership lists compiled between AD 4/5 and 72/3; thus, in PSI V 457 (AD 269), the grandfather of the great-grandfather of the father of the candidate's great-grandfather had been listed in AD 4/5 (Ruffini 2006; Yiftach-Firanko 2010a). Nevertheless, the papyri demonstrate that collateral relationships were as important in elite metropolite families as in the less Hellenized property-owning families. For example, in a family of Arsinoite Hellenes who obtained Antinoite citizenship (Figure 21.2), the brothers Valerius-Philantinoos and Philantinoos-Herodes leased out a plot of land jointly with their cousins Herakleia, Didyme (who was also Valerius-Philantinoos' wife), and Philosarapis; while, 14 years later, the same brothers, with their cousin Valerius-Philantinoos and other cousins Philosarapis and Herakleides-Valerius, jointly declared half a house in Ptolemais Euergetis occupied by Philosarapis' parents-in-law and Philantinoos-Herodes' ex-wife and her slaves (P.Fam. Tebt. 44, 48). After Philantinoos-Herodes died, his cousin Philosarapis assumed guardianship of his infant son Julius-Herodes, even though the boy's mother and maternal grandfather were still alive (TM Arch 192).

21.2.2 *Name Choice*

The custom of naming the firstborn son after the paternal grandfather was prevalent in both Greek and Egyptian society, and is documented for around one-quarter of families in Roman Egypt (Remijsen and Clarysse 2008, pp. 57–58). However, traditional Egyptian practice went further: the second son was named after the maternal grandfather, the first daughter after the paternal grandmother, and the second daughter after the maternal grandmother. The early Roman family with eight children already cited for their inheritance division illustrates this (Figure 21.3; cf. Lippert and Schentuleit 2010a, pl. 10; the absolute order of the children's birth is unknown, since Demotic documents always list sons from eldest to youngest, followed by daughters from eldest to youngest). Unfortunately, we know few families where the first two boys and girls were still alive at the moment of attestation, so it is exceptional for the full naming pattern to be preserved. Moreover, since maternal grandparents are rarely known from the available documentation, it is often difficult to check whether second children were named after them even when they survived.

Another notable feature of Egyptian naming practice, also observed in the family shown in Figure 21.3, is that parents obviously had no problem giving the same name to more than one surviving child. Since a few Egyptian names were sexually indeterminate, a brother and a sister occasionally also bore the same name. Homonymic siblings of the same sex were distinguished by the epithets “the elder” and “the younger,” or, occasionally, “the second,” implying the possible existence of even a third sibling of the same name (Sijpesteijn 1987b).

This practice, although not found in Greek society outside Egypt, was also followed by elite families of Arsinoite Hellenes (e.g. Ptollarion Elder and Younger, sons of Amatios; Didymos Elder and Younger, sons of Herodes: P.Mil.Vogl. VI 270; Keenan 1971) and Hermopolite gymnasial families, including that of Apollonios the *strategos*, whose father



¹ Or less likely, his cousin Maron son of Herakleides (the elder). For the full family tree of Herakleides the Younger, see P.Mich. V p. 17.
² For this reconstruction, see Rowlandson 2016: n. 58.
³ Ptolemaios son of Mysthes was her brother (P.Fam.Tebt. 20).
⁴ Married Herakleides son of Sarapion son of Herakleides; their child died in infancy (P.Fam.Tebt. 20).
⁵ On this marriage and the birthdate of Tyrannis, see Takahashi 2013.

Figure 21.2 The Philosarapis family, from Tebtynis/Antinoopolis. Source: courtesy Jane Rowlandson.

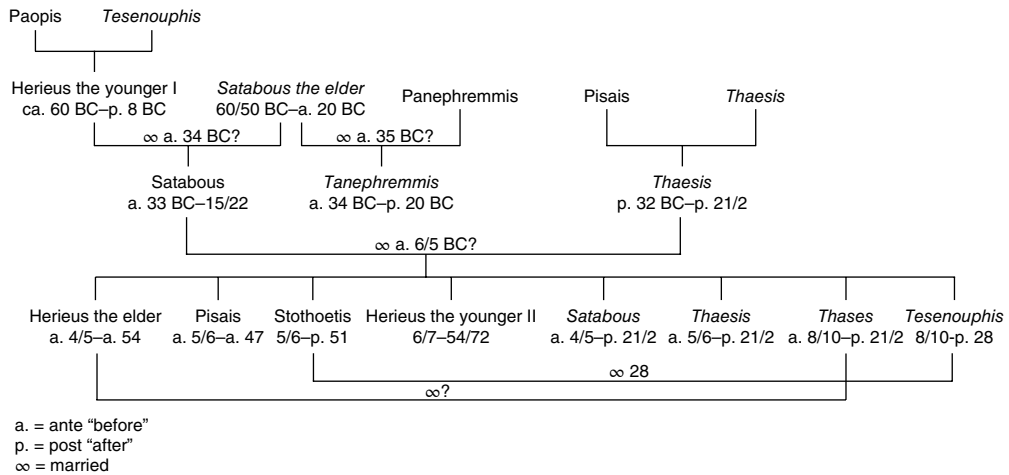


Figure 21.3 An Egyptian family from early Roman Egypt. Source: courtesy Sandra Lippert.

was Herakles the elder, son of Apollonios (P.Brem. 68–69; cf. SB IV 7440). Distinguished Alexandrians, however, conformed to standard Greek and Roman practice, using “Elder” and “Younger” to differentiate a homonymous father and son, such as Claudius Mounatianus the younger (P.Oxy. LXXII 4862 with P.Mil.Vogl. I 26).

Egyptians wishing to take a Greek name often chose one with the same meaning as their Egyptian name: thus, the prominent Egyptian nobleman Hakoris’ son was named Euphron, which means “to be content,” like his grandfather’s name, Herieus (Clarysse 1991b, p. 240); a Paminis son of Psenosiris (“the one of Min,” son of “the son of Osiris”) is rendered as Paniskos son of Sarapion in the Greek part of a bilingual votive inscription (SB III 6610; Vleeming 2001, pp. 233–234, no. 250). This practice enabled Egyptians to adopt a Hellenic persona without rejecting their original family and local identities. However, in other cases, there is no visible connection between the Egyptian and Greek name used in different cultural contexts; for example, Menches son of Petesouchos alias Asklepiades son of Ammonios (Verhoogt 1998, pp. 50–53).

Many names, both Egyptian and Greek, referred to local deities, hence the popularity of the names Pakebkis and Kronion at Tebtynis, where the local god was equated with Geb/Kronos, and of names referring to the jackal deity Wepwawet at Lykopolis, including Pauphois (“the one of Wepwawet”), Pounsīs (“the jackal”), and Lykophron (“clever like a wolf”).

The family in Figure 21.2 exemplifies contemporary developments in nomenclature, taking up the Roman name Valerius, which spread from Arsinoite army veterans into the local civilian elite. Of Herakleides-Valerius’ five sons, Hermes-Valerius, who died prematurely in mid-133, must be the eldest, combining names from his father and maternal grandfather; the next son, born in 126, also bore ancestral names. On obtaining Antinoite citizenship, the parents became more fashionable: both their next-born, Philsarapis, and their youngest, Philantinoos, are the earliest attested holders of these names (the latter expressing devotion to their new city’s patron deity), while polytheophoric names like Sarapammon and Neilammon were also second-century innovations (Clarysse and

Paganini 2009; Benaissa 2009). In the next generation, Lysimachos-Didymos reverted to tradition, naming his first two children after his own father and mother, and the others after other relatives (Rowlandson 2016).

21.3 Shaping Families: Sex Preference, Infant Exposure, Adoption, and Endogamy

The observation of Classical writers like Strabo (17.2.5) that, unlike the Greeks and Romans, Egyptians raised all the infants born to them finds confirmation from the Demotic documents, which show no predominance of male offspring in Egyptian families or evidence for exposure of female infants. For example, in the first-century AD family from Dime (Figure 21.3), there were four sons and four daughters at the time of Satabous' death; Satabous himself was his father's only surviving child, although he had a half-sister on his mother's side and must have had at least one elder brother who died young. His mother had either two sisters or a sister and a brother. His youngest son, Herieus the younger, had three daughters and only one son (Lippert and Schentuleit 2010a, pl. 10). The family's northern neighbors seem to have had four or even five daughters (cf. Lippert and Schentuleit 2010a, p. 336); no sons are attested. Another family of the same village had three sons, but each of them had only a single daughter (cf. P.Dime III 8; Lippert and Schentuleit 2010a, pp. 168–177).

The Greek papyri provide clear evidence for infant exposure, including the famous letter of Hilarion advising his wife, if she bears a female, to cast it out (P.Oxy. IV 744; Rowlandson 1998, p. 295), and widespread references to children “raised from the dung-heap,” often as slaves. This has led scholars to attribute the marked deficit of females reported in urban census returns to a persistent cultural difference between village families, who raised all their girls, and the Hellenized urban elite, who selectively reared more sons than daughters. This cultural difference in the treatment of daughters should not, however, be exaggerated, since there is no sign that metropolite and other elite men experienced difficulty finding wives of equivalent status, as would have happened if the sex ratio had genuinely been so uneven (it must be largely a matter of underreporting). The Egyptian inheritance system, which enabled daughters to succeed to material wealth, applied also to these elite metropolite families (Tacoma 2006, pp. 205–229; e.g. P.Oxy. VI 907, wealthy Hermogenes-Eudaimon's bequest to his three sons, two daughters, and wife).

Apollonios the *strategos*' family longed for a son, but raised at least two daughters, the elder, Heraidous, patently much-loved and well-educated. Egyptian parents also were happier with at least one son to perpetuate the male line, especially if the father held a lucrative priestly or administrative office that otherwise might be lost to a different branch of the family. In consequence, not only being childless, but also having only girls, was a reason to apply for divine intervention (cf. the stele of Taimhotep, BM EA 147; Lichtheim 1980, p. 62).

Exposed infants included both boys and girls (many probably the unwanted offspring of slaves), and although the adoption of boys taken from the dung-heap led to a heavy fine in the Roman Period (BGU V 1210, Sections 41, 107), some families without sons must have been tempted into surreptitiously adopting a foundling. The law (Section 92) also

prohibited boys raised from the dung-heap from becoming priests, while applications for gymnasial status included an oath that the boy was his parents' son "by natural birth, and neither adopted nor suppositious nor has assumed the identity of another person or homonym" (P.Mich. XIV 676, etc.). These restrictions on foundlings and adoptees perhaps encouraged people to conceal adoptive status unless they gained from it (e.g. inheriting jointly with natural heirs: P.Oxy. XIV 1721, XXXI 2583, SB XIV 11337); the papyri, especially census returns, record fewer adoptees than expected (and these are disproportionately from Oxyrhynchos, confirming underreporting elsewhere; see Kacprzak and Nowak 2018).

However, concealed adoption cannot explain the phenomenon of brother–sister marriage, as Huebner argues (2007, 2013, pp. 175–196; Remijsen and Clarysse 2008; Rowlandson and Takahashi 2009). Well-informed Greek writers like Philo of Alexandria were clear that the Egyptian practice differed from those of other Mediterranean peoples, and the Roman administrators, who insisted on accurate identification, accepted these marriages at face value. Many brother–sister marriages are attested within the gymnasial and other elite groups (including Alexandrian citizens), whose ancestry was monitored with particular precision. The recent identification of one secure and one possible brother–sister marriage between the eight siblings of the fecund Egyptian family from Dime (Figure 21.3) excludes an origin in Greek strategies for dealing with heirlessness by adopting boys as future sons-in-law, and neither do their obviously wealthy circumstances support the theory that brother–sister marriage was a means to prevent the splitting up of real estate, as proposed by Cruz-Uribe (in Lesko 1989, pp. 206–207). As it stands, brother–sister marriage outside the royal family is attested in Egypt as early as the 22nd Dynasty, in a high-ranking Memphite family of Libyan descent (Černý 1954, pp. 23–24); the concentration of the phenomenon mainly in the Fayum and neighboring areas in the Ptolemaic and Roman Periods (Bagnall and Frier 2006, pp. 126–127) might in fact point to an origin in Libyan elite custom, spreading first to Egyptian priestly families (P.Chic. Haw. 1), and then by the first/second century AD to larger parts of the society.

Other close-kin marriages can be difficult to identify except when family archives confirm the relationship between partners. Uncle–niece marriage, frequent in the Greek world and legalized for Romans by Claudius, was rarer in Egypt, but occurred among the choachytes (funerary priests) of Ptolemaic Thebes (Mairs and Martin 2008–2009). First-cousin marriages are attested from the Early Ptolemaic to the Byzantine Period across all social milieus. Among the early Ptolemaic Memphite choachytes, Pachau's marriage to his cousin's daughter Tahasies preceded their daughter Nehoeris marrying her cousin Imouthes (Thompson 2012, pp. 149, 167). In early Roman Theadelphia, the priest Harthotes' daughter married her cousin, also named Harthotes (TM Arch 99; cf. cousin marriages in the Sakaon archive P.Sakaon 38; TM Arch 206; also P.Oxy. III 494, SB XX 14167, P.Laur. I.8.11, P.Cair.Masp. III 67295, PSI XII 1227; cf. Figure 21.2).

21.4 Family and Occupational Identity

Family identity in Egyptian society was reinforced by the widespread heritability of professions, exemplified in the families of notaries at Ptolemaic Thebes (Arlt 2011), undertakers at Hawara (Uytterhoeven 2009, pp. 330–339), and weavers at Oxyrhynchos and

elsewhere. At Oxyrhynchos, four generations of Tryphon's family were weavers, as were Pausiris and his three sons, although both apprenticed their sons to other families for training (TM Arch 249 and 176; cf. P.Ehevertr. 22). Explicit counterexamples are rare (e.g. the weaver, son of a postman, attested in CPR XXIX 4). The strongest evidence for heritability concerns priests, whom the Roman administration required to be of priestly descent in both the paternal and the maternal lines, as shown by circumcision requests (see later), the *epikrisis* procedure (to establish status and privileges; P.Tebt. II 291), and the exclusion of the sons of priests aged over 60 years and of foundlings adopted by priests (BGU V 1210, sections 91–92). This was probably already the norm in Ptolemaic Egypt, when priests are attested marrying only other priests' daughters, and vice versa (cf. P.Ehevertr. 1, 37, 7D, 8D+Z; CPR XXIX 1, 5; apparent counterexamples are due to misreadings). A similar pattern of endogamy is seen among choachytes (P.Ehevertr. 2, 3, 4, 6, and 7; see also Muhs 2005c, pp. 181–194) and embalmers (P.Ehevertr. 1D; P.Chic.Haw. 1, 2, 3, and 6). A strong priestly class pride is also suggested by other legal documents in which women are identified not only by their father's name, but also by his priestly titles (CPR XXIX 4 (the buyer); P.Chic.Haw. 7A (a neighbor) and 9 (the buyer in a conditional sale)). Non-priestly professions are never mentioned in a woman's filiation, making endogamy within other professional groups harder to detect. However, a first-century AD sale of a loom by a woman mentions that her son-in-law is a temple weaver (Lippert and Schentuleit 2010a, pp. 396–401, no. 35). We must therefore expect a congruence between extended family and professional group, especially in smaller communities.

21.5 Life Cycle Transitions

21.5.1 *Childbirth and Anniversaries*

Childbirth was extremely risky for both mother and baby, and relatives consulted oracle books and resorted to prayers and amulets in the attempt to ensure a successful outcome (see Chapter 28). Family letters, especially to or from the grandparents, temper eager anticipation of a new baby with concern for the mother's health (Rowlandson 1998, pp. 282–289). A premature delivery threatened both lives, even if the mother had previously given birth to healthy children. Lucius Pompeius Niger, a legionary veteran born in Oxyrhynchos, received a letter from his daughter Thaubas reporting that her poor sister Herennia had died four days after a miscarriage at eight months (P.Fouad 75 with Bagnall and Cribiore 2006, pp. 126–134; TM Arch 195). Yet, Herennia had successfully borne a son some years earlier, "little Pompeius," who sent greetings in Herennia's letters to her father.

The precise date and hour of a child's birth could be noted for the purpose of casting a horoscope. The family papers of the illiterate weaver Tryphon preserve two horoscopes, one for a child born on January 3, AD 46, probably his son Apion, the other for a birth c. AD 15–22 (Rowlandson 1998, p. 114). Over 200 similar personal horoscopes survive in Demotic and Greek (e.g. SB XXVI 16826, for "little Ploutianos," born at the seventh hour of the night of July 10/11, AD 392 at Kellis, Oasis Magna). These include only minimal predictions about the subject's life chances, which the astrologer presumably

conveyed in more detail orally after consulting his handbooks; only the unusually elaborate “Old Coptic horoscope” for someone born in AD 95 contains fuller – if vague – interpretation, much of it concerned with family relationships. For example:

From year 25, month 2, day 25, until year 34, month 5, day 24, Jupiter decides. If Jupiter (was) a hostile star on the <day> of his birth, perhaps he shall neglect his wife, or be at enmity to her, or his children shall misbehave in turn, or he shall part (from them) in mercantile business. If there was an evil star ... a wife shall not make a term for him <for ever>, a child shall not come to him for ever ... (Neugebauer and van Hoesen 1959, p. 33)

The celebration of childbirth and birthdays is well attested in the Egyptian milieu, at least for men: the priests of the Edfu temple received a substantial extra ration of about 251 of wine for a birthday (Schentuleit 2006, p. 380), and the usually parsimonious Instruction of Ankhsheshonq ($16.x+9-x+11$; Lichtheim 1980, p. 172; Hoffmann and Quack 2007, p. 289; but see the alternative reading in Agut-Labordère and Chauveau 2011, pp. 293, 358) recommends taking out a loan for a birthday party, just as for long-term investments like buying a field and marrying. Such celebrations were evidently viewed as an important part of social life, strengthening the links between the family and the community. The birth of a child, especially a son, also prompted festivities: members of a West-Theban cult association were expected to pay 30 deben (or 600 drachmas) when they became the father of a son (de Cenival 1972, p. 106), presumably for a party.

A child’s first birthday occasioned particular family celebration; one in three infants did not survive that far (Rowlandson 1998, pp. 296–297; cf. PSI XII 1242). Letters, invitations, and household accounts in Greek show that the birthdays of older children and even adults were also celebrated, by inviting family and friends to protein-rich dinners. In December AD 100, army veteran Lucius Bellenus Gemellus wrote to his son Sabinus requesting fish worth 12 drachmas for the fortieth-day feast of his daughter Gemella’s son (Parca 2013, p. 472), and a few days later wrote again requesting a fish on the 24th or 25th for Gemella’s birthday. The following August, he told his servant Epagathos to buy two pigs for fattening at home to sacrifice on Sabinus’ birthday, and a couple of years later in December he asked Sabinus to buy 12 cocks from the market to celebrate Saturnalia and to send delicacies and bread for Gemella’s birthday (P.Fay. 113–119; TM Arch 134). Gemellus was wealthy, and was Romanized by his army service, but birthdays were widely celebrated by elite families; even a land lease from early Roman Tebtynis specifies a gift of one artaba of baked loaves on the landlord’s birthday (PSI X 1129).

21.5.2 *Circumcision*

Evidence for the circumcision of boys is not available until a rescript of Antoninus Pius made it illegal, except for those who were required to be circumcised in order to enter the priesthood; the application had to be made to the arch-priest (*archiereus*) in Alexandria, where the boys’ pure priestly descent, as well as their “purity” and lack of “blemishes,” was to be established (for details, see Nicole 1909, pp. 22–24). Therefore, while circumcision was most likely practiced for boys entering the priestly order already during the Ptolemaic Period, we cannot say whether other Egyptian boys at that time were also

circumcised: the Roman law may have restricted an originally more widespread custom to those for whom it was absolutely necessary. Earlier evidence points to male circumcision being practiced in Egypt outside the priesthood at least in some social and ethnic milieus (Herodotus 2.36–37, 2.104; Diodorus Siculus 1.28, 3.32), although not in others (cf. the statement of Piye, the Kushite king who invaded Egypt c. 753 BC, that some of the Delta princes demanding parleys were unclean, because uncircumcised and eaters of fish: Fitzenreiter 2011, pp. 265–266). In seven of the nineteen known Roman circumcision requests and related documents (dated c. 150–320), application was made for more than one boy at a time. Obviously, since it necessitated traveling to Alexandria and presenting in person to the *archiereus*, people avoided costs by having several sons – and sometimes other close relatives (cousins or half-brothers) – circumcised at once. In an exceptional case, a village priesthood seems to have decided to send all their boys together: at least 13 of them (SB VI 9027). Not all documents mention the boys’ age; the eight for whom it is known are respectively 12 (two cases), 11, 8, 7, 5, 2, and 1; another two must be younger than 10. The youngest boy to be circumcised as oldest of a batch is 8, suggesting that the circumcision had to have been accomplished before the boys were able to enter the temple at about 8–12 years (for the apprenticeship of priests in the “Book of the Temple,” see Quack 2002a, pp. 161–171; unfortunately, the text gives no entrance age). The fact that parents sometimes chose to circumcise much smaller boys if they had to go through the application procedure anyway shows that, at least by that time, circumcision was not considered a rite of passage for adulthood, as maintained by Otto (1905, p. 215).

One Ptolemaic Greek text from the Memphite Serapeum mentions circumcision of a girl in preparation for marriage, which Strabo and later Classical writers recorded as a widespread Egyptian custom, not confined to priestesses (UPZ I 2; Huebner 2009). Huebner argues that the Therapeuteria, attested in a third-century AD letter and some dinner invitations as a rite of passage for unmarried girls, was the family celebration following the girl’s circumcision, similar to that celebrated among modern Egyptian families. Such a striking continuity of tradition is not implausible, but unproved.

21.5.3 *Coming of Age*

We still cannot define exactly when Egyptian boys and girls came of age. The Demotic wisdom text of Papyrus Insinger (17.22ff.; Lichtheim 1980, p. 199; Hoffmann and Quack 2007, p. 257; Agut-Labordère and Chauveau 2011, p. 247) gives a clearly stereotyped description of human age brackets:

He (i.e. man) spends ten years being underage (*sbk n ms*, literally, “small of birth”), not yet knowing death and life; he spends another ten years with apprenticeship and study (literally “picking up work and education”) by which he will be able to make a living; he spends another ten years making economies and acquiring possessions on which to live ...

It is easy to accept that children up to 10 years were considered underage – the expression *sbk n ms*, “underage,” as well as another term, *smg*, “immature” (literally “dumb”), is, in fact used for children unable to act for themselves in a legal context. However, it is unlikely that an 11-year-old was already seen as fully adult: the wisdom text points to a

phase of adolescence between 11 and 20 during which a boy eventually came of age. As we have no indication that this happened at a fixed age, it perhaps depended on physical signs like a change in voice and the growth of facial hair, or when his family, instructors, village elders, and so on considered him “mature”.

The official age of adulthood (and hence tax liability) in Ptolemaic Egypt is also uncertain, but was probably 14 (Clarysse and Thompson 2006, 2, p. 42). The Roman administration defined children as becoming adult at 14 (actually 13, since age was reckoned inclusively; Kruit 1998), when Egyptian boys started paying poll tax and could act in a legal capacity without a guardian; girls also ceased to be underage (*aphelix*), but still needed a woman’s guardian for legal transactions (see Chapter 22). However, Roman citizens from 14 (12 for girls) to 24 were considered *minores*, who by the late second century AD required a *curator* for legal acts; after the universal grant of citizenship in 212, this practice extended among the whole population, although the precise terminology varied (Arjava 1999).

Before coming of age, boys from privileged status groups (including priests) underwent *epikrisis* (scrutiny) to confirm that their ancestry qualified them for the status. For most status groups, it was sufficient to cite proof that the boy’s father and maternal grandfather had both qualified, although gymnasial families provided proof of ancestry right back to the first-century lists (see earlier). A family’s preparation of the necessary documentation would be an opportunity to relate to the younger generation memories and stories of ancestors now deceased, no doubt reinforced at celebratory *epikrisis* dinners, to which women as well as men were invited (P.Oxy. XLIX 3501; cf. VI 926, XXXVI 2792, LXVI 4541).

In Greek cities, including those of Egypt (and from AD 200, all the Egyptian *metropoleis*), a boy’s transition to adulthood involved participation in the *ephebeia*, a year or more of mainly athletic training organized by the gymnasium in preparation for citizenship and integration into the civic community. Ephebes wore a distinctive *chlamys* (“cloak”), and were often shown garlanded – like the adolescents in mummy portraits, depicted with downy facial hair, who had died on the threshold of manhood (Montserrat 1993). Lists of each year’s graduates were inscribed on the gymnasium wall, starting with the “crowned” victors in the competitive games (Legras 1999; Remijsen 2014b; see Chapter 24). Candidates for admission to the *ephebeia* were accompanied by relatives, who presented and guaranteed them, and were interrogated about their family and ancestry, as in this record for Dionysios son of Asklepiades son of Nemesion, aged 14 years, 16 days:

Profession? Student. Mother’s name? Lykariaina, daughter of Eudaimon. Who presented you? My brother Nemesianos. Who are your guarantors? My mother’s brother Metrodoros, and my mother’s cousin, Sarapammon. Where do you live? In the Hadrian quarter, near ... What is your place among your siblings? Fifth, including females. Who are they? By both parents, Nemesianos, Menon, and myself; on the father’s side, Diodoros and Alexandra ... (P.Gen. II 111, AD 137 or 158)

Another application (P.Oxy. XLIX 3463, AD 58) states that the boy had received a ceremonial haircut at the Great Serapeum before the priest and public officials. This ritual had an Athenian precedent, where aspiring ephebes dedicated a shorn lock to Artemis at the Apatouria festival, but it is suggested that in Egypt the aspiring ephebes’ shorn hair

took the specific form of the “Horus lock” traditionally worn by Egyptian elite children and depicted on mummy portraits of young boys from the Roman Period; this convergence of cultural practice distinguished the Greco-Egyptian elite. Other attestations confirm that the elite of the *chora* – not only Alexandrians – celebrated the ritual hair-cutting of their adolescent sons with gifts and festive dinners (Montserrat 1991; Legras 1993).

21.5.4 *Celebrating Marriage*

The Instruction of Ankhsheshonq (11.x+7, Lichtheim 1980, p. 168; Hoffmann and Quack 2007, p. 285; Agut-Labordère and Chauveau 2011, p. 286) advised: “Take a wife when you are 20 years old, that you may have a son while you are young!”

Almost all free women married, the youngest at around menarche – like Taimhotep, who was aged 13 years, 7 months when she married the Memphite high priest (BM EA 147, St. Memphis 20; cf. Thompson 2012, p. 130; Bagnall and Frier 2006, pp. 111–116). The Late Period evidence for marriages concluded between the husband and the bride’s father, not the woman herself as in most Ptolemaic and Roman settlements, may imply that pre-Ptolemaic Egyptian brides married even before menarche, or at least that the brides were considered still underage (P.Mattha 4.6–9 with Lippert 2004, pp. 167–173, cf. 75; also P.Ehevertr. 2D, 316BC). Most women, however, married in their later teens or early twenties – like Tesenouphis, aged about 20 (P.Vienna inv. no. D 6590, AD 28; Lippert and Schentuleit 2010a, pp. 439–444, no. 40). The census data suggest that men typically married somewhat later, in their 20s or 30s, and that few men married wives older than themselves. However, the average age gap between spouses, 7.5 years, conceals considerable variation, resulting partly from the differential pattern of remarriage for widowed or divorced men and women (see later).

No official registration was required for marriage in Egyptian, Greek, or Roman tradition, although the Roman administration meticulously regulated intermarriage between persons of different legal status, as well as other legal consequences of marriage (Bagnall 1993c). No Demotic documentary sources show how Egyptian marriages were celebrated; no Egyptian religious ritual for marriage is known (Pestman 1961, pp. 6–7). A financial settlement for the wife was not compulsory, and sometimes was postponed until after the birth of the first child. Demotic oracle questions attest that some men sought divine help in deciding whether to marry a certain woman, or in choosing between two possible candidates (Zauzich 2000, pp. 6–8; 20; cf. Greek examples in Rowlandson 1998, pp. 318–319). At least for a girl’s first marriage, the bridegroom may have had to ask her hand from her father, as was customary in the Late Period (P.Ehevertr. 1–4), although in Ptolemaic marriage settlements it is usually the woman herself who is addressed, not her father (Pestman 1961, pp. 11–13). Gifts from the bridegroom (and/or his family) to the bride seem to have been common practice. The marriage was probably validated simply by announcing it to the community, and by the woman’s subsequently moving in with the man: the Egyptian expression “to dwell together with XY” is synonymous with “to be married to XY.” We have no hard Egyptian evidence for wedding receptions like the Greek invitation letters that survive mainly from the Roman Period (Rowlandson 1998, pp. 319–320). Although we may be confident that Egyptians did traditionally hold wedding celebrations, it remains uncertain whether these would have been organized by the bride’s

family, the bridegroom's, or both. By the Roman Period, at least among the elite, the wider family gave wedding presents to the couple; Eudaimonis, mother of Apollonios the *strategos*, decided to give a present (of money) to her nephew even though she was at odds with his parents, because she had herself received one from his mother (P.Flor. III 332).

Particularly in the Ptolemaic Period, Greek papyri reflect the Greek form of marriage by *ekdosis* ("handing-over": Yiftach-Firanko 2003), but by the Roman Period, Greek documents also reflect Egyptian marital property arrangements; some families opted for both a Greek and an Egyptian contract (P.Mich. V 341).

21.5.5 *Widowhood, Remarriage, and Divorce*

Widowed or divorced men remarried even into old age, choosing much younger brides, but widows and divorcées reaching the end of their childbearing years rarely remarried, even if their children were still underage (Bagnall and Frier 2006, pp. 116–127; Pudsey 2011). The census data, however, must conceal many early remarriages by both sexes, and some relatively mature women did remarry, such as Thaubarion, who had a son by Maron before remarrying and producing three more children (Figure 21.2; Sarapias also had a previous marriage before – in her early 40s – bearing her only known child, Tyrannis-Isidora, to the much younger Philantinoos-Herodes; cf. Huebner 2013, pp. 92–106). A document from early Roman Alexandria returning the dowry of a pregnant widow explicitly permitted her to expose the baby and remarry (BGU IV 1104). But later, a widowed Roman citizen went to considerable lengths to ensure the legitimacy of her son, born after his father's death, and to have a suitable guardian appointed – apparently without the intention to remarry (Rowlandson 1998, pp. 290–291; cf. P.Lips. II 142).

Egyptian law allowed both husbands and wives to divorce unilaterally. However, depending on the kind of marriage settlement, divorce by the husband could be prohibitively expensive, because the woman was entitled to financial compensation and/or lifelong support (Pestman 1961, pp. 64–71). Some settlements inserted a clause excluding this in the event of the woman's infidelity (Pestman 1961, p. 61), and a number of temple oaths in which a woman was called upon to swear that she had no contacts with other men during her marriage (Kaplony-Heckel 1963, no. 1, pp. 5–14) testify to the relative frequency with which ex-husbands claimed infidelity as the reason for divorce. Divorce itself often went unrecorded; as with marriage, a public proclamation usually sufficed. All known Demotic divorce documents come from Upper Egypt, starting in the Late Period (26th and 27th Dynasties, showing that they are not due to Greek influence), and extending to the early first century BC. These documents certified to the woman that she was divorced, that her husband no longer had any claims on her (financial, legal, or moral), and that she was free to remarry without hindrance (Pestman 1961, pp. 58, 71–75; cf. Yiftach-Firanko 2003, chapter 8 for divorce arrangements in Greek).

21.5.6 *Death and Burial*

A primary duty of a deceased person's heirs in Egyptian, Greek, and Roman society was to organize their funeral and burial. In Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt, families had a wide range of options for commemorating and burying their loved ones, following Egyptian

or Greek traditions, or both combined (see Chapter 23); mummification became fashionable among the elite, although the traditional Egyptian mask was often replaced with a Roman-style portrait. The will of Sintheus, an Oxyrhynchite landowner aged 60, required her sons to devote 1600 drachmas from their inheritance to giving her an “Egyptian burial” (PSI XII 1263).

Testamentary documents in both Latin (for Roman citizens; cf. Migliardi Zingale 2005) and Greek often included provision for expenditure on the burial, starting with the will of an early Ptolemaic cleruch; in this same document, the deceased acknowledged his paternity of his female slave’s son, and freed them both, despite having legitimate sons by his wife (P.Petrie² I 3.18–23). Four centuries later, the will of the wealthy Oxyrhynchite Akousilaos seems as concerned for the welfare of his slaves and freedmen as for that of his wife (his cousin) and their son, who were to give the slaves and freedmen 100 drachmas annually for a birthday celebration at Akousilaos’ tomb (P.Oxy. III 494; cf. LXXII 4875). Some testaments took the opportunity to express appreciation or disapproval of family members: Kronion of Tebtynis cut off his eldest son Kronion with just 40 drachmas “because he has been wronged by him in many ways during his lifetime” (P.Kron. 50).

Egyptian “testaments” are notoriously difficult to spot, because Egyptians avoided alluding to their prospective death, with the effect that these documents usually are indistinguishable from normal donations or sales (Lippert 2012, p. 172). When the buyer is a child of the vendor, it is at least possible that the sale was fictitious and actually meant as a will (Lippert 2012, p. 147). Egyptian legal documents became effective only upon their being handed over to the beneficiary, which could easily have been delayed by a trusted third party until after the benefactor’s death (Lippert 2012, p. 145). Provisions for burial are not a common feature of such documents, but if they occur, this again points to a use as will, even if, as in the case of P.Phil. Dem. 2 (El-Amir 1959, pp. 7–12), the beneficiary is not identified as a close relative. A small group of legal documents, all from the Ptolemaic Period, stipulate the immediate transfer of all or part of a person’s property; in exchange, the beneficiary has to guarantee a lifetime maintenance and to organize the burial for the benefactor (Spiegelberg 1923; see also Vittmann 1980; P.Brit.Mus. IV 1). In those cases where the benefactor is a man and the beneficiary a woman without visible kinship ties, Spiegelberg assumes her to be the man’s housekeeper, but it could equally well be the man’s wife, since spouses did not inherit from each other according to the legal order of succession (Lippert 2012, p. 125) and the man’s property in the case of his dying childless and intestate would have fallen back to his family.

Ordinances of Egyptian cult associations usually include the stipulations that, if one of the members dies in the village, the others have to mourn for him or her and arrange for burial, and if he or she dies outside, also to send people to bring the body back home and to morally support the grieving family (de Cenival 1972, pp. 187–90; Monson n.d.); similar precepts are to be found in the Greek ordinance P.Mich. V 243, where members have to shave their hair in mourning and finance a one-day funeral feast for the deceased, participate in his or her interment, and place wreaths on his or her tomb. It is on the basis of such an ordinance that a woman, together with her brother-in-law, brought suit against her sister’s co-members, who did not contribute to her funeral (P.Enteux. 21).

Epitaphs, although often conventional in sentiment, also express genuine feelings of affection and loss. The scion of a Hermopolite office-holding family who died aged 12 had enjoined Philhermes, “who was an affectionate and true brother to me, not indeed by nature (he was my cousin), but in devotion exceeding even a father’s place,” to inter him without female lamentations or a second, malodorous burial (i.e. mummification: I.Hermop.Magna 71). Ammonios, an eminent athlete and Alexandrian office-holder originating from Hermopolis, inscribed a tomb at Tuna el-Gebel containing his father, mother, brother, sister, niece, grandmother, and a friend who had shared his travels and athletic exertions (I.Hermop.Magna 49).

21.6 Family Conflict

Inheritance was a perennial cause for strife between family members (e.g. P.Erbstreit; TM Arch 8), especially half-siblings. In 170 BC, a lawsuit over an agricultural plot was filed before the *laokritai*, a tribunal of Egyptian judges, by a wife against her husband’s younger half-brother (P.Siut xii–xviii; Chapter 13); she saw her own son’s expectations diminished by the fact that her husband inherited only two-thirds of his father’s property and the son from a second marriage the remaining third. However, the judges dismissed her claim that her husband should have inherited all, because he had accepted his father’s marriage settlement for the second wife and consequently accepted any potential half-siblings as co-heirs. The misfortune of someone’s dying without either surviving children or siblings, so that two remote relatives competed for the inheritance, led to a trial documented in another Demotic papyrus of 115/14 BC (Thissen 1994, pp. 283–287).

Two separate Demotic documents (P.BM inv. 10845: Hughes 1969; Quaegebeur 1983b; P.Berlin inv. P 15660: Zauzich 1992–1993) attest cases of underage children turning to a god to demand justice against their father (or, in the second case, possibly stepfather), who had them abandoned to charity after their mother’s death. Being minors, they probably could not approach a court as claimants against their father, who would have been their legal representative. The Memphite Serapeum archive preserves a complaint of twin girls against their mother, who abandoned her family and ran off with a Greek soldier, precipitating their father’s death (UPZ I 18–19).

Orphans were particularly vulnerable to depredation of their inheritance by both strangers and relatives. Uncles, who most commonly undertook the role of guardian, were not all like conscientious Philosarapis, whose records relating to his wardship of his cousin’s son Julius-Herodes survive; some abused their position to increase their own inheritance at their ward’s expense. Didyme, mentioned in the opening paragraph of this chapter, eventually sought the prefect’s help in retrieving her maternal inheritance from her uncles, and similar cases recur throughout the papyri (e.g. BGU I 98; P.Cair.Isid. 64; P.Dryton 33); most family archives contain at least one inheritance dispute (cf. P.Fam.Tebt. 20; P.Mil.Vogl. I 25, 27, VI 264).

FURTHER READING

On family demography, the key studies are Clarysse and Thompson (2006) and Bagnall and Frier (2006). Huebner (2013) develops further the latter's groundwork on family structure in the Roman Period and analyzes intra-family relationships, illuminated by cross-cultural comparison. For children within families, see especially Parca (2013) and Pudsey (2013); several chapters of Evans Grubbs and Parkin (2013) are also relevant to Egypt. Many texts translated in Rowlandson (1998) and Bagnall and Cribiore (2006) shed light on all aspects of family life. For readers of French, Legras (2010) is usefully structured around the life cycle, providing mainly details on Greek sources.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

Gender Issues: Women to the Fore

Maren Schentuleit

Women of ancient Egypt have long been a focal research point in Classical Studies, even before the invention of gender studies, whether due to the colorful stories about Cleopatra VII, or to the exotic descriptions of gender relations in Herodotus. The picture that those highly suggestive sources creates is put into perspective by legal, administrative, religious, literary, and personal (i.e. private) evidence extant from Macedonian, Ptolemaic, and Roman times. These sources were initially evaluated separately, according to the language used; papyrologists were concerned with the Greek texts, while Egyptologists dealt with the Hieroglyphic, Hieratic, and Demotic. However, the discovery of bilingual archives – such as that of Dryton and his wife Apollonia, also known as Senmonthis – makes it obvious that the language of a document and the name of a person do not inevitably support a conclusion regarding their ethnicity and status. It is exactly this not only linguistic, but above all cultural bilingualism (cf. Parca 2012, p. 328; see Chapter 19) that necessitates a holistic, transdisciplinary examination of the material that attests the presence of women in numerous social spheres in Egypt. The basis for this was their strong legal status. Thus, it is all the more surprising that women do not at all appear – or are pejoratively described – in most of the ancient sources. A reason for this is the low literacy rate of women (for an anthology of Greek and Coptic women's letters, whether written or dictated, see Bagnall and Cribiore 2006); Demotic – not to mention Hieroglyphic and Hieratic – testimonies and Greek texts were almost exclusively written by men, and the addressees or recipients were also mostly men. This means that women were often described from a male perspective. This becomes most obvious in the Demotic teachings, which depict women – with only few exceptions – as non-persons, as objects that do not feel or think. Dieleman (1998) emphasizes that these performative or didactical texts do not describe the social reality between men and women, but that the reason for the negative representation lies in their function, namely “to maintain the male share in this

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system (of power relations)” (Dieleman 1998, p. 43). Documentary sources, which allegedly represent reality, must also be interpreted in terms of their context and purpose. This can be seen with tax lists, for instance, on which women were listed under the professions of their fathers or husbands for tax-status reasons; thus, the “policewoman” of a Demotic household record actually turns out to be the daughter or widow of a policeman (P.Count 4 recto, col. iv, l. 175; see Clarysse and Thompson 2006, 1, p. 145).

22.1 The Legal Status of Women in Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt

A key to understanding the role of women in Egypt is their legal status. Yet, it is important to take into account that from the conquest of Alexander the Great onward, different legal systems coexisted in Egypt, namely the Egyptian law and the Greek law applicable in the *chora*, as well as the simultaneously applicable laws of the Greek cities (*poleis*), and later also Roman law.

According to Egyptian law Egyptian women were fully capable of owning property and acting. Greek law also ascribed to women the right to own property, but they needed a guardian (*kyrios*) for legal transactions. Usually, this was a close male relative, such as the husband, father, or oldest son. However, this kind of guardianship was far less powerful than that of the *kyrieia* of the Greek homeland. Roman law freed women with three or more children from the obligation to subject themselves to a *kyrios* (Lippert 2008, pp. 115–116). The mention of a guardian for Egyptian women has erroneously led to the conclusion that in Greco-Roman times they did not dare acting without a *kyrios* (e.g. Sijpesteijn and Worp 1995, p. 518), but this comes from cases in which the document language is Greek, and from the year 118 BC the language of the document was decisive for the law applied. This explains why the very same woman appears without a *kyrios* in a Demotic document and with a *kyrios* in a Greek contract (Schentuleit 2009). From the beginning of Roman rule in Egypt, the registration procedures for Demotic private deeds changed – meaning that it was costlier, and they were gradually less often drawn up – so that the presence of large parts of the Egyptian legal tradition vanished. There was another consequence: one was forced to draw up contracts in Greek, with all its legal implications, so that even Egyptian women repeatedly needed a *kyrios*. From AD 140, guardians became mandatory for more and more legal transactions; this only changed in AD 212 with the *Constitutio Antoniniana*, according to which Roman law also applied to Greco-Egyptian women. Legally, the *tutor* (“*kyrios* according to Roman law”) was only required in special cases, but in practice women held on to the Greek tradition and acted with a *kyrios* (Vandorpe and Waebens 2010b, pp. 416–422). The exact reason for this discrepancy has not yet been identified. However, women were entitled to conduct all kinds of legal transactions, to act as citizens, to carry on lawsuits, and to manage their own assets, which they could operate, and which they could bequeath.

The possibility of drawing up marriage contracts was also carried over from pharaonic times. These were not necessary to conduct a marriage, but they settled financial details such as the amount of alimony for the woman both during the marriage and in case of

divorce – which the wife too could file for – as well as claims to an inheritance, especially with regard to children from other marriages. In Greek marriage contracts, matrimonial property regimes are mentioned, including the mutual control over joint assets of married couples and regulations concerning the behavior of the spouses. The latter prohibited, for instance, the husband from having a mistress, or the wife from leaving the house without the husband's knowledge (Lippert 2008, pp. 166–172). Each spouse could be charged with adultery; if it was the woman who committed adultery, the husband was no longer obliged to pay alimony after separation. This apparently had the result that husbands often tried to accuse their wives of extramarital affairs in case of divorce. The means of finding justice in such cases in Egyptian milieu was the “temple oath”, which the wife had to take on a worshiped deity at a certain temple, and in which she swore that she had not been unfaithful during marriage (Lippert 2008, p. 167); for example, “By the bull of Medamud, which rests here, and every god, who rests with him. I did not sleep with a man, I did not have sexual intercourse with a man from our wedding onward up to now. There is no lie in the oath” (O.Tempeleide 1).

The Egyptian and Greek legal hereditary right made the children the sole heirs, and husbands or wives were omitted. Particular and individual arrangements could, however, be made in a marriage contract or in the husband's will (e.g. P.Dryton 1–4). The children – sons as well as daughters – were equal heirs (Rupprecht 1994, p. 111), and girls could even receive an additional dowry alongside their inheritance (e.g. P.Dryton 3–4). However, according to the Codex Hermopolis – a Demotic collection of legal propositions – and in line with Egyptian law, the eldest son, or the eldest daughter if there were only daughters, inherited a double portion of the inheritance, and furthermore functioned as its trustee. The inheritance law let women naturally handle their property – be it money, personal property, or real estate (Lippert 2008, p. 125).

The strong legal status of women in Egypt was the foundation for their presence and their activities in public social spheres, although this may not be identical to what is nowadays understood as or can be understood as “equality.”

22.2 Female Spaces

22.2.1 *Ptolemaic Queens: From Goddess to Public Enemy*

Royal wives and king's mothers in pharaonic times had an important ideological role as guarantors for the continuity of the kingdom; however, only a few participated in political decision-making (Roth 2009). Ptolemaic queens, on the other hand, were not only perceived as the female part of a royal couple, but stood out due to their autonomous economical, social, religious, and political actions.

Arsinoe II was the daughter of the first Ptolemaic ruler and his third wife Berenice I. Before marrying her brother Ptolemy II, she was the wife of the Thracian king Lysimachus and of her half-brother Ptolemy Ceraunus. She was involved in the murder of Agathocles – heir to the throne of Lysimachus – which provoked the Sixth Diadochian War, as a result of which Lysimachus died. The victorious Seleucus was killed by Ptolemy Ceraunus, who convinced Arsinoe to marry him. He had her acclaimed queen, and later

had the two sons she had with Lysimachus (i.e. the legitimate heirs to the throne) murdered. She was spared by him, and travelled to Egypt around 279 BC, where she married Ptolemy II before 274 BC. He exiled his first wife, Arsinoe I (a daughter of precisely that Diadochian Lysimachus of Thracia) to Koptos in order to marry his sister, making her queen for the third time (Hölbl 1994, pp. 32–33). Arsinoe II is probably the first female Ptolemy who was depicted with her reigning husband in a ritual scene at an Egyptian temple during her lifetime; she also bore the royal title *nšw.t-bj.tj*, “Queen of Upper and Lower Egypt,” which designates her as co-regent (Minas 2005, p. 134; versus Hölbl 2003, p. 91, who assumes that the title was bestowed upon her posthumously).

Ptolemy II and Arsinoe II were the first living royal couple to receive cult, as the “Sibling Gods,” while Arsinoe II, particularly after her death, received numerous honors, including a cult of her own as a Greek and Egyptian goddess (for more details, see Chapter 27), which became very popular (on her “visual” identity, see Chapter 34). A testimony of private worship can be found on a votive relief of a pastophorus-priest and boatman of Arsinoe, most likely from an Upper Egyptian temple (Albersmeier and Minas 1998).

Berenice II succeeded Arsinoe II as the Ptolemaic queen in 246 BC, being the wife of Ptolemy III, son of Ptolemy II and Arsinoe I. She herself was the daughter of Magas, King of Cyrene – a half-brother of Arsinoe II – and the Seleucid princess Apama. Probably for dynastic reasons, Berenice II and Ptolemy III claimed to be descendants of Arsinoe II through their titles: Ptolemy by assuming the throne name “Heir to the Sibling Gods” and by referring to himself as the son of the Sibling Gods in official documents (for the possibility of an adoption of Ptolemy III by Arsinoe II, which is suggested by a scholion of Theocritus, see Pfeiffer 2004, p. 69), and Berenice by referring to Arsinoe II with the female Horus name (the first part of the traditional king’s titulary), *Hr.t s3.t hq3 jr.t.n hq3.t*, “the She-Horus, daughter of a ruler that was born by a female ruler” (a different translation is to be found in Pfeiffer 2004, p. 21, no. 138: “daughter of the ruler, eye of the ruler”). This way, the succession became an inheritance. The adoption of a female Horus name, the use of the title “pharaoh” in a female form (*Pr-3.t*), and the depiction of the queen in temple scenes showing the handover of the rule by the gods were all innovations under Berenice II (Pfeiffer 2004, p. 166; Minas 2005, p. 135). While her husband fought against the Seleucid Empire in the Third Syrian War, Berenice conducted the official duties, and minted her own coins (Grimm 1998, p. 79). Already during their lifetime – like Ptolemy II and Arsinoe II – the royal couple was worshiped within the eponymous Alexander cult as the *Theoi Euergetai* or the “Benefactor Gods” (Minas 2000, pp. 102–103). In the Canopus decree of 238 BC, the same Egyptian rituals were performed for their deceased daughter Berenice as for the holy Mnevis or Apis bull; processions were organized, and she was identified with the daughter of Re, god of the sun (Pfeiffer 2004, pp. 258–266). After the death of Ptolemy III, their son Ptolemy IV Philopator acceded to the throne. Apparently, his mother still had enormous political influence, so that she, along with other family members, was murdered shortly after his accession to power. Posthumously, in 211/10 BC, Berenice’s son Ptolemy IV established the priesthood of *athlophoros* (“prize-bearer”) in Alexandria for his mother (Minas 2000, pp. 116–119).

Cleopatra I was the first Ptolemaic queen ever to officially reign as a guardian for her minor son Ptolemy VI, who was only six years old when his father Ptolemy V died in 180 BC. With

this, she succeeded in what Arsinoe III had failed at, as the latter was murdered for trying to reign for her five-year-old son Ptolemy V. Cleopatra's political status was also reflected in the dating formulae of official documents, in which her son's name bore the self-explanatory epithet *Philometor* or "Mother-loving" (Minas 2000, pp. 133–134). However, there are no pictorial representations of this relation: on the temple reliefs, Cleopatra appears only posthumously in the context of ancestral worship (Minas 2005, p. 136 with reference to Winter 1978, pp. 8–10, 14, 18, 22).

In 175 BC, shortly after his mother's death, Ptolemy VI was married to his sister Cleopatra II. For the following decades, this Cleopatra and her daughter Cleopatra III were the female elements of the changing constellation of rulers, and once again broadened the spectrum of power of Ptolemaic queens. From 170 until 164/3 BC, the sibling couple reigned together with their brother Ptolemy VIII, who married Cleopatra II after Ptolemy VI's death in 145 BC; three years later, he also married her daughter, his niece Cleopatra III. Both women appear as co-representatives of the royal power alongside their husband (Hölbl 1994, pp. 172, 185). On the temple reliefs, the two can be only distinguished on the basis of their designations: "his sister" for Cleopatra II and "his wife" for Cleopatra III. However, there is a depiction of the mother at the Philae temple, showing her making a libation to the gods, while her daughter – like any other Ptolemaic queen before her – only stands by (Minas 2005, pp. 140–141). In the year 132 BC, a civil war broke out, and Ptolemy VIII and Cleopatra III fled to Cyprus, while Cleopatra II acclaimed herself as sole ruler, and started her new era of reign with year 1. The reaction of the duped Ptolemy was gruesome: he had their son Ptolemy Memphites dismembered, and the body parts sent to the mother (Hölbl 1994, p. 175). Nevertheless, after the recapture of the country, they reconciled, and once again the three reigned together; this reign only ended when Ptolemy VIII died in 116 BC. Unorthodoxly, he did not make one of his two sons his successor, but Cleopatra III; Ptolemy IX functioned only as co-regent. For a few months, until her death, Cleopatra II managed to establish a reign of three (Hölbl 1994, p. 183). In the dating formula of documents, Cleopatra III is mentioned before Ptolemy (e.g. in the process log Mallawi 602/10 from the seventh regnal year: El-Aguizy 1988; corrections in the *Thesaurus Linguae Aegyptiae* [Vittmann]). On temple reliefs, Cleopatra is depicted in front of him, but Ptolemy is the one who is actually sacrificing (Mammisi at the temple of Deir el-Medina: Minas 2005, figure 10). The cult of Cleopatra III was enormously extended personnel-wise: no less than five eponymous priesthoods were established for her (Pfeiffer 2008b, pp. 67–68).

The most famous of all Cleopatras was around 19 years old when her father Ptolemy XII died in March of 51 BC and she took over the official duties as Cleopatra VII. For a short time, she was the sole ruler, and later she successively shared the reign with her two younger brothers Ptolemy XIII and XIV, who were supported by powerful men of the court. The shared reign of the siblings over Egypt was registered in Ptolemy XII's will, with Rome as a guarantor. However, the rivalry between brothers and sister went so far that Cleopatra had to leave the country temporarily. Egypt's involvement in the Roman civil war between Pompey and Caesar also had an impact on the inner Egyptian power conflicts, which culminated in the support of the commonly rather unpopular Cleopatra by Caesar, who had been victorious over Pompey. Caesar, as the executor of her father's will, conferred the sole governmental power on Cleopatra after the decisive battle, in

which Ptolemy XIII met his death; Ptolemy XIV was only pro forma instated as co-ruler (Hölbl 1994, pp. 205–212). Despite various speculations, the question as to what extent Cleopatra's relationship with Caesar was based on genuine feelings has to be left open; however, it is certain that the story would have been different without the liaison between them. Egypt – and especially Cleopatra – was politically dependent on Caesar. Their particular situation, however, prevented the country from being incorporated into the Roman Empire as its province. The birth of their son Ptolemy XV Caesar (nicknamed Caesarion) broadened Cleopatra's sphere of influence (Caesarion's hitherto assumed date of birth, found on the Serapeum stele IM 8 l. 27 (June 25, 47 BC), can no longer be certain: Devauchelle 2001, pp. 41–57). His official recognition as Caesar's son in Rome was one of Cleopatra's targets. However, before this could even happen, Caesar died. Cleopatra had her younger brother and co-ruler Ptolemy XIV killed, and instated the barely three-year-old Ptolemy XV Caesar instead. The actual power relations are reflected by the dating formulae of official documents, which mention the mother before the son, who is referred to as “the father- and mother-loving” (e.g. stele BM 1325 from the last Ptolemaic regnal year; Vleeming 2001, no. 158). With Antony, the defeater of Caesar's murderers, a new Roman ruler appeared, whom Cleopatra again knew how to win over to her side, and who was – due to personal relations – politically valuable for her. But he could also profit from Egypt's resources, and was later even financially dependent on Cleopatra. With him, she had twins, who bore the programmatic names Alexander Helios and Cleopatra Selene, and later they had a third child, Ptolemy Philadelphus. However, Antony's political adversaries were able to take advantage of his second marriage with Cleopatra (he was already married to Octavia), his recognition of Caesarion as Caesar's son, and the generous land grants he gave the Egyptian queen and their children to bring about his deposition, which earned Cleopatra the status of “public enemy” (*hostis*). A year after the battle of Actium, the couple had to surrender to their opponent Octavian. The account of Antony and Cleopatra's suicide, as Diodorus and Plutarch have described it, characterizes the image of the queen up till today.

22.2.2 *Absent Roman and Byzantine Empresses*

In sharp contrast to the Ptolemaic queens, the Roman empresses were – except in coin portraits – only sporadically represented in Egypt. Just two portrayals of empresses on temple reliefs have been transmitted. In the temple of Kalabsha in Lower Nubia, Livia Augusta, wife of Augustus, is portrayed, and mentioned as “his (i.e. the king's) sister and wife,” although the cartouche has been left blank (Winter 1979, pp. 68, 69, n. 11); in Esna, the family of the Severi meets the city gods, sacrificing. Septimius Severus and Julia Domna offered themselves and their sons Caracalla and Geta to the Egyptians or the Egyptian priests as guarantors for the dynastic continuity in times of crisis (Heinen 1991a, p. 282). Sabina Augusta, wife of Hadrian, accompanied her husband on his journey to Egypt, and was immortalized by the poetess Julia Balbilla in a series of four epigrams inscribed on the colossus of Memnon, whom “the beautiful” Sabina heard “singing” several times (Bernand and Bernand 1960, nos. 29–32; Hemelrijk 1999, p. 118, 167; see also Chapter 6).

With Zenobia, who assumed the reign over Palmyra and the Roman Orient for her minor son from AD 267/8 until 272, a woman once more reigned over Egypt by exploiting the

weakness of the Roman Empire. She conquered Egypt and Arabia with her troops in AD 270; two years later, she was defeated by the Roman emperor Aurelian after two battles, and was taken to Rome (Hartmann 2001, pp. 242–394).

Probably due to the dogmatic struggles in Alexandria, Byzantine emperors and empresses did not travel to Egypt, although empresses such as Eudocia, wife of Theodosius II, a poet herself, sometimes acted as patroness for gifted citizens from Egypt, among them the poet Cyrus from the Panopolite nome (see Box 6.1).

22.2.3 Priestesses

Being a priestess had a long tradition for women in Egypt. From the Old Kingdom, priestesses were responsible for specific deities and particular duties, which changed in the course of time, just as did the social class from which the women came. In Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt, priestesses were involved in Egyptian, Greco-Egyptian, and Greek cults. The tasks of Egyptian priestesses mostly included the musical accompaniment of religious rites and the care of sacred animals (Chapter 26; Johnson 1998, p. 1403), both for female and for male deities. The twins Tages and Taous appeared in 164 BC as the divine sisters Isis and Nephthys at the funeral ceremony of the holy Apis bull, which was mummified at the temple of Ptah and entombed in the catacombs of the Serapeum in Memphis. Later, they were involved in the funerary cult of Apis (Thompson 2012, pp. 216–228; on the twins, see also Chapter 30). With the priesthood of Egyptian temples came the right to have a share in the temple earnings, including in the form of sacrifices. Due to this connection, priesthoods and their associated income could be sold and bequeathed. Hence, a woman could inherit a priestly office from her father, which she *de facto* could not execute due to her gender. She nevertheless had the chance to profit from her inheritance by leaving the fulfillment of the duties to a male relative, or by leasing the position and part of the income to someone else (Johnson 1998, p. 1404; O'Brien 1999, p. 198).

It is difficult to identify priestesses in the Greek cults, for in Greek texts a Greek theonym may refer to an Egyptian deity: Athena is equated with Neith, Aphrodite stands for Hathor, and Demeter is identified with Isis (Quaeghebeur 1983a, pp. 303–324). However, it is known that Demeter actually had Greek sanctuaries in the Oxyrhynchite nome and the Fayum, at which women worked as well as men (P.Count 8.7; see Clarysse and Thompson 2006, 1, p. 234; Thompson 1998, pp. 699–707).

Female priesthood was – according to the present body of source material – not organized in the same way as the male priesthood. Belonging to one of the five Egyptian priestly classes, called *phylai*, was reserved for men. No *phylai*-priestesses are found on the lists of priests written in Greek and drawn up as check lists for the Roman administration, on the applications for admission to priesthood, or in Demotic evidence. This collides with evidence in Greek documents that mention priestesses of a certain *phyle* (two examples can be found in Dunand 1978, pp. 352–374). However, such attestations are so rare that there has to be an alternative explanation. A plausible thesis may be that in those cases, the father's affiliation to a *phyle* was mentioned for some specific reason. When in BGU I 28 from AD 183, for example, a married couple announced the birth of their daughter, the demonstration of the priestly descent on both sides was advantageous, and was probably supposed to be highlighted by reference to the *phyle* affiliation of the mother's grandfather

(Schentuleit 2018). The text of the Canopus decree, which commanded the establishment of the fifth *phyle* in 238 BC, describes the allocation of new priests in the following way: "... should the priests which were appointed to priests from the first regnal year (scil. of the pharaoh) on been placed in this *phyle* together with these which will have been appointed until the ninth regnal year, month four of the season Shemu, day one, together with their children forever. The priests which were appointed until the first regnal year should stay in the *phylai* they were before, likewise their children from this day forever, by registering them in their *phylai* of their fathers ..." (Demotic version II. 7–8; cf. Pfeiffer 2004, p. 110). Although the word "descendant" – or the word "children," as was used in the Demotic and Hieroglyphic version – theoretically leaves open whether the future priests were female or male, the affiliation to a certain *phyle* was associated with the father.

In hierarchically higher priestly offices and in the administration of the Egyptian temples, women are not found. Nonetheless, there were cult associations with female members, in parallel to the male associations (de Cenival 1977, pp. 21–24).

The priesthood of the eponymous cult was reserved for women and men from Macedonian families. The priestesses and priests of the royal cult for Alexander the Great and for the Ptolemaic rulers, in office for one year, are mentioned by name in the dating formulae of Demotic and Greek documents. In 268/7 BC, Ptolemy II established the office of the *kanephoros* for the deceased Arsinoe II. A terracotta figurine in the British Museum may portray such a "basket-carrier"; she is dressed in a long, short-sleeved *chiton*, and carries a basket on her head, covered by a long cloth (BM reg. no. 1862, 1021.3). In 211/10 BC, the office of the *athlophoros* was established for the cult of Berenice II. As the women are mentioned by name, the act prescripts reveal that the *athlophoros* of the one year became the *kanephoros* of the next. The priesthood of the *hiereia Arsinoes Philopatros* – also in honor of Arsinoe II – was established in 199/8 BC. Cleopatra III received the largest number of eponymous priests: in 131 BC, there was the office of the *hieros polos Isidos*, literally the "sacred foal of Isis"; in 116/15 BC, the positions of the "wreath-carrier" of Queen Cleopatra, "torch-bearer" of Queen Cleopatra, and priestess of Queen Cleopatra; in 107/6 BC, the priest of Queen Cleopatra (Pfeiffer 2008b, pp. 67–68; for the *kanephoros*, see also Chapters 27 and 34).

22.2.4 *Businesswomen and Working Women*

Generally, women did not have access to administrative or military offices in Greco-Roman Egypt. Every now and then, there were cases in which the wife assisted her husband, but as far as is known, they did not occupy official positions. In the colophon of a cattle sale of the year 106 BC, however, a female scribe named Tamen is mentioned, although she did not write the document herself, but had it written by a male deputy on her behalf (Boswinkel and Pestman 1982, pp. 119–123). Given the same formulation, "NN wrote on behalf of the woman NN," that can be found in some documents from Djeme, Tamen was apparently not an active female notary, but the owner of a notary's office that employed scribes (Pestman et al. 1977, pp. 141–144).

In other fields of economic life, however, women are attested who increased the financial assets of their household through their work. Nonetheless, sources are scant,

because women – unlike men – were mostly mentioned without an occupational title (Johnson 1998, pp. 1402–1403); in tax lists and Demotic legal documents, they are often subsumed under the occupational title or status of their fathers or husbands (Schentuleit 2009; Clarysse and Thompson 2006, 2, p. 201), while Greek documents often used personal descriptions for identification, so that sometimes even the titles of men are lacking. Apart from that, it was quite uncommon to mention women by name when they were, for instance, listed with their husbands; the husband was then mentioned by name, sometimes including his occupational title, and the family was subsumed under “his wife and children” (cf. lists of tombs and mummies, such as P.Berlin inv. P 3116, 114 BC, Thebes, transliteration and translation in *Thesaurus Linguae Aegyptiae* [Vittmann]).

In the production and process industry, women were mostly involved in the manufacture of textiles and wool, and in weaving. In addition to working at home, women also performed their tasks in larger factories such as the weaving mill of Apollonios, the minister of finances (*dioiketes*) of Ptolemy II and the landlord of a large estate in the Fayum (Pomeroy 1984, pp. 163–171). A register from the Polemon district of the Fayum lists for the year 250 BC almost 800 women in the towns Mouchis, Oxyrhyncha, and Tebtynis who were involved in the production or processing of wool by order of Apollonios (*apographe* or “list” from the Zenon archive: P.Cair.Zen. II 59295; see Rowlandson 1998, no. 202). One should keep in mind that these female workers were not referred to as “weavers,” but as “women who process wool” (*gynaikon ton ta erea ergazomenon*). The training for weavers took several years, and was not costless for the parents of the trainee (for the education and training of girls, see later).

There is far less evidence for women in food production than one might expect; in a register listing mummies that were supervised by certain choachytes (funerary priests), the Demotic version mentions a woman called Tisas, who is referred to as wife of Horus and bakeress (*šm.t*). The Greek parallel text abbreviates the occupational title, and the editors apply it to the husband (*Horos aner Tisatos artokop(ou)*; P.Berlin inv. P 3116, col. iii, l. 18 = UPZ II 180a, col. vi, l. 1, transliteration and translation in *Thesaurus Linguae Aegyptiae* [Vittmann]).

Occasionally, there is evidence for saleswomen (*šwt.t*; Pestman 1993, p. 59, n. f), female fruit and vegetable retailers (*lchanopolis*), female beer retailers (Johnson 1998, p. 1403, no. 50), and alewives (*kapelis*). Also testified are a stockwoman (*pantopolis*), a female doorkeeper, a female embalmer, or a female shoemaker (*qse.t*); the latter does not bear an occupational title in the Greek version of the document (P.Berlin inv. P 3116, col. ii, l. 20 = UPZ II 180a, col. iii, l. 3, transliteration and translation in *Thesaurus Linguae Aegyptiae* [Vittmann]; on the discussion of occupational titles, see De Meulenaere 1955, p. 80; *Thesaurus Linguae Aegyptiae*, lemma 6454). Among the pastoralists, female swine-, cow-, and gooseherds are testified. With reference to two female bath-house managers, it is assumed that each was in charge of a bath house for women, while the male relatives listed with them were responsible for the bathing area for men (Clarysse and Thompson 2006, 2, pp. 202–203).

At least one text from the Fayum suggests that women were also active in the fields of agriculture and fishing (Clarysse and Thompson 2006, 2, p. 202; P.Fay 91, AD 99 mentions a female olive-bearer, see Hengstl 1972, p. 40). More common were female

artists, such as singers, musicians, and dancers (Clarysse and Thompson 2006, 2, p. 202; Rowlandson 1998, nos. 77, 215–216; Hengstl 1972, pp. 46–50, 1978, no. 94).

Professional wet nurses were employed for children from royal families – for instance, for the future kings Ptolemy V and Ptolemy XIII – and from non-royal families. The legal regulations for such employments are known from several Greek contracts; in Demotic script, only a single supporting document is known. Greek documents of the Roman era show that it was often not the employer's own offspring for who the wet nurse was employed, but a foundling who was taken in, and who later served as a slave in the household (Pomeroy 1984, p. 162; Lippert 2008, p. 114).

Among the slaves, many women and girls can be found; however, the term “slave” indicates a status rather than an occupational title. Slaves were not without rights in Egypt, but they did not have decisive power over their own life, and could be sold, pawned, and bequeathed. The children of female slaves were slaves by birth, and belonged to the owner, who was often also their father. Female slaves worked in the household of their master, but were also hired out (for slaves in Egypt in general, see Chapter 18).

In the discussion of the economic dependence of women, the amount of their wage was decisive. But even for the better-documented section of male wage-earners, this is often hard to calculate. There are lists, receipts, and so on referring to wage payments, but specifications concerning the relation between wage and workload are often missing. In one and the same document, different wages for men can be listed without any mention of details; a reason for this might be the varying workload (time, effort) or the like. In this respect, the varying wages or wage claims of women and men must not implicitly reflect discrimination (Pomeroy 1984, p. 168 on PSI VI 599; O.Petr. 339); for a conclusive evaluation, the sources are still too thin. With respect to the better-documented work of the wet nurses, payment was far below the subsistence minimum until well into the second century AD (Drexhage 1991, pp. 411–412).

22.2.5 *Women as Property Owners*

The percentage of women who were landowners and had property is difficult to determine; it probably varied from place to place, and it certainly differed according to social class. In this respect, no general assertion, but only selective observations can be made. The validity of our sources listing female landowners, such as tax lists, deeds of sale, and loan agreements for which properties served as security is also challengeable. Tax lists, for instance, registered every single assessable household, naming the head of the household first. The lists from the third-century BC Fayum, Oxyrhynchite, and Lykopolite nomes indicate that 11.5% of all householders were female (Clarysse and Thompson 2006, 2, pp. 301–302; the authors note that in one of the texts, an untypically high number of Greek single women is mentioned, which may falsify the result; the number falls to 6.2% if those are not included). However, the head of the household was not necessarily the house owner. While widowed, unmarried, or divorced women may have been the actual owners of the house they lived in, those whose husbands were absent due to various circumstances were nominally the head of the household, but probably not the property owner. It is striking, however, that a great part of the households led by women were one-person households, in contrast to only 47 of the 378 households led by men. That the household head was not always identical with the house

owner is shown by a second-century BC text, which lists the property owner in addition to the householder. The number of female property owners in this text amounts to 16% (Clarysse and Thompson 2006, 2, pp. 302–303). The husband could very well be entrusted with the administration of the property or real estate, although the wife was the legal owner. The common practice that (e.g. after a marriage) the husband functioned as the manager of the marital property and assets had the effect that women are less often mentioned in legal or administrative documents than one might expect (O'Brien 1999, p. 165). For, whether one takes the Fayum or Thebes, Greek, Demotic, and bilingual deeds of sale or lease, loan agreements, wills, and deeds of donation all show that women were basically able to own, sell, or bequeath any kind of property, be it real estate, priesthood, cattle, chattel, money, or crop (O'Brien 1999; Schentuleit 2009). Nevertheless, Lippert notes that women seem to have been more involved in activities that had little to do with physical commitment, for example trading land instead of cattle (Lippert 2008, p. 115). According to O'Brien (1999, p. 198), the Theban material shows that women are also less often mentioned as loaners or debtors, although the sources from Soknopaiou Nesos of the Roman era do not confirm this (Schentuleit 2009, pp. 197–198).

Tax lists of Roman and Late Antique Egypt inform us about patterns of landownership in rural and urban areas (e.g. in the Arsinoite, Hermopolite, Panopolite, and Antaiopolite nomes). Percentages of female owners fluctuate between high figures in, for example, Theadelphia (61.5%, vineyards) and the Panopolite nome (38%, vineyards and orchards) and low ones, for example, in Karanis (below 13%, private land) and among the Antinoite owners of land in the Hermopolite nome (9.5%). In general, women seem to have owned smaller holdings than men, with vineyards more common than grain lands (Tacoma 2006, pp. 107–111; Bagnall 2008 with P.Lond.Herm.; Geens 2007a, pp. 201–204). Among the owners of large estates in third-century Egypt (see Chapters 16 and 18), several women are found, including Aurelia Demetria and Aurelia Appiana Diodora alias Posidonia, the wife and the daughter, respectively, of the Roman *equus* Aurelius Appianus (Rathbone 1991), and Claudia Isidora alias Apia from Oxyrhynchos (Rowlandson 1996). Although female ownership decreases over time, women are still attested among the small group of large landowners in whose hands wealth became concentrated (on landownership, compare Chapter 16). Aurelia Charite, for instance, was one of the wealthiest landowners of fourth-century Hermopolis (P.Charite).

22.3 Education and Professional Training

Access to education was limited for girls and women, and was more dependent on the socioeconomic background of their family than it was for boys and men. Even in higher social classes, it was not considered necessary or desirable for girls to learn more than the basic ability to read and write (Parca 2012, p. 327; Cribiore 2001, pp. 74–78). How education and professional training for girls was organized is not well known. Some training and teaching contracts have survived, but they either pertain to boys and young men or to slave girls. Often, these contracts involved longer-term apprenticeships, for which the slave owners sometimes had to pay a fee, such as in the case of a slave girl who was supposed to be trained as a flutist in one year for 100 drachmas (BGU IV 1125).

Learning the trade of a weaver also took several years, as the contract for the slave girl Helene shows (P.Mich V 346a, AD 12–13). Since the apprentice gradually raised the employer's profits, the expenses were not as high as in the case of mere teaching contracts. Slaves were also hired out; several contracts show that the wage of a slave working as a wet nurse was paid to the owner (Drexhage 1991, p. 439). All in all, the number of training contracts is far smaller than one might expect. This is certainly due also to the fact that verbal agreements were far more common than today. Only under special conditions or in cases of extraordinary financial commitment by one of the parties were agreements documented. However, the lack of training contracts for free girls is certainly not entirely coincidental. It can be assumed that they received their training from their family, and that the service of a third party was thus not needed.

Women were also able to train apprentices, as shown by a training contract for a boy who was supposed to learn the *somphiake techne* – an “embellishment craft” possibly related to mummification – from a woman over a period of five years (Drexhage 1991, p. 403 on P.Heid. IV 327, AD 99). Female teachers are also repeatedly testified (Cribiore 2001, pp. 78–82).

22.4 Upward Mobility

The relatively rigid hierarchical social system in Egypt, especially in Roman times, complicated the ability to move into a higher social class (see in general Chapter 18). Education and professional training were means to move up, but women only partially had access to these (see earlier). For Egyptian men, military service also paved the way for a better status. A possibility for Egyptian women was to marry a man of a higher status. Almost every member of the Greek-Macedonian population had social prestige, notably the cleruchs in Ptolemaic times, who came to Egypt as soldiers and were granted plots of land after the military conquest was completed (Fischer-Bovet 2014, p. 118 and *passim*; see Chapter 11). These parcels of land or *kleroi*, which could – depending on one's military rank – be of 100 arouras or more, were initially not inheritable, but only tenantable; later, it became licit to appoint one's children or wife as the heir of the *kleros* (Rupprecht 1994, pp. 82–83). Egyptian soldiers, who were enlisted in the Upper Egyptian army, were often referred to as “Persians.” At that time, this no longer described an ethnic affiliation, but the affiliation to a privileged class, as is the case for the class of “Greek/Hellenes” (Vandorpe and Waebens 2010b, p. 425; Clarysse and Thompson 2006, 2, pp. 138–147). While an indigenous wife and children from these status-unequal marriages could achieve social prestige and prosperity, the offspring of marriages between an Alexandrian and a woman from the *chora* could never acquire full privileges (Vandorpe and Waebens 2010b, p. 422).

In the third and second centuries BC, relationships of this kind were certainly also promoted by the lack of Greek women in Egypt (see later). After one or two generations, however, a demographic group originated that could be defined neither as “Greek” nor as “Egyptian” (see Chapter 19). This was also a reason for the law reforms of 118 BC, which constituted that, in the treatment of conflicts, the language of the legal document defined the legal basis, and not the ethnic affiliation.

In the Roman era, the possibility for upward mobility through marriage to a member of the army was severely limited, which was above all due to the prohibition of marriage for soldiers under Augustus. Nevertheless, this did not stop soldiers from having relationships – without having to fear legal consequences. Children from those relationships were illegitimate, and they were not taken into account when it came to inheritance until the time of Hadrian; the offspring of status-unequal relationships were not granted Roman civil rights. Especially, the legal status of illegitimate wives was pitiful, as they could not assert any legal claims in case of separation or the husband's death. After discharge from the military, soldiers were allowed to get married. While the wives were still not granted Roman civil rights, their children enjoyed this privilege, at least until AD 140. The worsening of the legal status of soldiers' women possibly led to a decline of this kind of relationship, which must have been a goal of these rigid regulations. Civil society and members of the army – with their privileges – were supposed to be kept separate; military discipline as an expression of Roman imperial power was not to be infiltrated by personal love affairs (Vandorpe and Waebens 2010b, pp. 425–432).

22.5 An Unequal Sex Ratio

Lists drawn up by the administration for the purpose of tax collection give an impression of the sex ratio. For the Arsinoite and Oxyrhynchite nomes in the second half of the third century BC, a surplus of men in Greek families can be noted (126 men per 100 women), while in Egyptian families, the ratio was rather balanced (104.1 men per 100 women). In the assessment area of the Themistos district (Fayum), the numbers for the year 229 BC are even more extreme: in the Greek families of army members, there were 176.7 men per 100 women, while in the families of indigenous villagers, the ratio was 108.8 men per 100 women. This discrepancy cannot be explained by assuming that, because of their military background, more men than women immigrated to Egypt. For, the numbers and the surplus of men refer to the families as a social structure. Unmarried men – brothers as well as sons of the householder – contribute most to this surplus. We may only speculate about the reason for this phenomenon: it might be the intended or contingent incompleteness of the sources, the assumption that female children were neglected in favor of male descendants and thus died earlier, or the infanticide of female newborns. Nevertheless, due to this surplus of men, there was a lack of Greek women who were marriageable and capable of bearing children. A way out of this dilemma was to marry an Egyptian woman (Clarysse and Thompson 2006, 2, pp. 307–314; Fischer-Bovet 2014, p. 249), which entailed the latter's social advancement.

Census declarations from the Roman era – which the household head had to submit to the authorities for tax purposes – show a relatively high discrepancy in the numerical sex ratio between rural areas and the *metropoleis*. Here, too, the data mostly come from the Arsinoite and Oxyrhynchite nomes, although the declarations from the cities prevail (Bagnall and Frier 2006). Altogether, the material is somewhat problematic and incomplete; hence, the compilers Bagnall and Frier frequently had to adjust the raw data. According to their analysis, the sex ratio in the *metropoleis* of the second and early third centuries was at 125–130 men per

100 women, while that in rural areas was between 90 and 115, which gives an average of 100–120 men per 100 women. The deviant first-century ratio of 293.3 men to 100 women is rejected as being implausible by Bagnall and Frier, and should be attributed to the incomplete recording of women in the census declarations. A diversification according to different ethnic groups is not possible.

22.6 Christian, Ascetic, and Monastic Life

While women had no place in the ecclesiastical hierarchy, they were well represented among the Christians of Egypt, and some female believers became martyrs (for examples, see Rowlandson 1998, pp. 70–83). Women were also, from the very beginning, present in the ascetic and monastic life of the country (Elm 1994; for monasticism, see Chapter 29). While some women, labeled “perpetual virgins,” lived a celibate life in an urban context or perhaps in desert cells outside of monastic communities (Schroeder 2014), others retreated to the convents of the monastic movement. Pachomius had built a monastery for his sister Maria, where other women joined her, and by his death two female communities were part of his federation (*koinonia*). The implementation of his rules, however, was supervised by a brother, among them Apa Peter. The federation of the White Monastery also included one community for women. Although the founder Shenoute stressed the (theoretical) equality of men and women, he exercised authority over the female monastery through an elder brother, and imposed punishments (e.g. “Taese, the sister of the little Pschai, (... who) ran to Sansno in carnal desires: 15 strokes”; Elm 1994, p. 305). His authoritative conduct faced resistance from the nuns. The sisters’ principal task in the communities was the production of textiles, destined for both male and female monastics, but for the remaining part, they were economically dependent on the brothers.

FURTHER READING

For a representative overview of the source material and an anthology of translated Greek, Demotic, and Coptic documents from various fields of social life, see Rowlandson (1998). Pomeroy (1984) uses a wide array of Greek sources for her discussion on Egyptian, Greek, and Jewish women with different social backgrounds. Melaerts and Mooren (2002), a conference volume on the social role and status of women in post-pharaonic Egypt, includes contributions on the background of female immigrants (La’da), on violence of and against women (Parca), on slavery (Scholl), and on economic and legal questions, and sheds light on a wide range of female-specific topics from Greco-Roman and Byzantine Egypt. Albersmeier (2005) discusses the iconography of the effigies of Ptolemaic queens, which can be understood as an expression of the new religious politics and the influence of the queens on the political fate of the country. The biography of the businesswoman Apollonia of Pathyris gives an indication of the role of privileged women of the *chora* in Ptolemaic times, and has been reviewed in an exemplary manner by Vandorpe (2002a). The private correspondence of women is the focus of the study of Bagnall and Cribiore (2006); the Greek and Coptic self-penned and dictated letters highlight the importance of literacy with reference to an autonomous social life (the major part of the Coptic letters date to the period after the Arab conquest).

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

Cultural Identity: Housing and Burial Practices

Anna Lucille Boozer

23.1 A Life-Course Approach

Not so long ago, archeologists had few resources for exploring cultural identity through housing and burials in Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt. Thankfully, recent fieldwork developments have provided substantial new, refined data for increasingly nuanced research questions about cultural identity (Bagnall 2001; Bagnall and Davoli 2011). Likewise, a range of innovative books and articles has harnessed informed theoretical frameworks in order to maximize the potential of these new data (e.g. Collombert 2000; Rowlandson 2004; Riggs 2005; Yiftach-Firanko 2009; Vandorpe and Waebens 2010b; Vandorpe 2012). These contemporary advances enable the present chapter to explore cultural identity from an optimistic standpoint, as well as suggest new lines of inquiry.

This chapter combines scholarship on the life course with housing and burial evidence to explore identity in Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt. The “life course” concept integrates aging with embodiment, ritual, memory, material culture, and social identity. This sociological model of the life course considers the human life as a continuum and as occurring within a range of social contexts (Gilchrist 2012, p. 1). As such, the life-course approach interrogates cultural identity with respect to continuity and change within an individual’s life.

Debates about continuity and change are critical to questions of identity in Greco-Roman Egypt, ensuring the suitability of the life-course approach. In the Eastern Mediterranean, historians and archeologists focus particularly on the delicate balance between the Greek and Roman characteristics of society. In Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt, the cultural stratigraphy is deeper and more complex than in most other regions, and requires meticulous study in order to tease out multiple identity shifts during these periods. Ideally, debates about identity in this era could be resolved through highly localized

explorations of domestic, socioeconomic, funerary, and religious spheres of life and death. The extant sources, however, rarely permit this luxury.

In this chapter, I explore how the dominant ethnic groups, genders, and localities experienced life-course stages in ordinary life and death through the materiality of the house and the tomb. A critique that could be leveled at this approach is that it loses the specificity inherent in identity, which is always contextually contingent. In order to mitigate the issue of context, however, I work through the data by locality and attempt to isolate diachronic change when they allow it. This contribution cannot claim to explore cultural identity within the life course fully, but it aims to highlight significant themes that will be useful for future exploration of this topic.

23.2 Cultural Identity in Greco-Roman Egypt

The concept “identity” conveys the ways in which specific individuals and groups might be differentiated from other individuals and groups within social relationships (Jenkins 1996, p. 4). In Ptolemaic Egypt, Greek and Egyptian ethnic identity contributed to individuals’ sense of themselves and of one another, but ethnicity appears to have had less impact than other facets of identity. Moreover, ethnicity is a thorny concept: although there was a set of legal statuses, these do not map uniformly upon what we might now term “ethnicity.” An individual’s gender, age, profession, kinship, or place of residence (e.g. town or village; coastal, Nile, or desert oases) seems to have impacted their emplacement in Ptolemaic society more substantially. Over time, intermarriage, acculturation in both directions, social mobility for Egyptians and Jews, and the pervasiveness of Greek cultural and administrative institutions cultivated a social elite who were recognized socially as Hellenes in the Ptolemaic Period (Clarysse 1979, 1992, 1995; Goudriaan 1992; Derchain 2000; see also Chapter 19).

Cross-cultural studies of ethnicity suggest that it is common for the relationship between material culture and cultural identity to shift over time (Jones 1997, pp. 113–115, 124–125, 130–134). In the material world of Ptolemaic Egypt, Greek art forms were not exclusively for “Greeks” and Egyptian motifs were not the preserve of “Egyptians.” Moreover, Egyptian exposure to Classical and Hellenistic Greek art during the Ptolemaic Period brought about a different way of using images. Artisans began to recreate the observed world in naturalistic sculpture, paintings, portraiture, and public display.

At the time of Roman occupation, “Greek-ness” and “Egyptian-ness” were no longer two discrete states. Instead, being Greek and being Egyptian were just two possible constructions of identity that might complement, blend, or clash with one another (Boozer 2012; see also Hall 2002). A person’s social importance was defined less by their ethnicity than by their cultural affiliations (Goudriaan 1988, pp. 8–13, 75–77). The constitution of these constructions could vary depending on the context, such as everyday life versus the afterlife, as represented in burial.

After the Roman annexation of the country, Egypt’s political, legal, and economic organization was changed, and social status became more codified than under Ptolemaic rule (Bowman and Rathbone 1992; see Chapter 18). From the Roman vantage, any resident of Egypt who was not either a Roman citizen or a citizen of the chief cities (Alexandria,

Naucratis, Ptolemais, or Antinoopolis) was an Egyptian, although those who were metropolitans had a distinct status within that class. This catch-all designation applied to metropolites and villagers alike, without respect to their ethnic descent.

The impact of Roman rule upon the material world was as palpable as its impact upon the political and economic landscape. The combination of broad cultural trends – the spread of elite Roman and Greek portraiture, the codification of social status – contributed to the increased use of naturalistic portraits in the domestic and funerary spheres. Portraiture in this mode offered a new means of self-presentation, with an elite, high-cultural form (Riggs 2005, p. 246). These naturalistic portraits were used in conjunction with Egyptian texts and images in funerary art, as well as Egyptian treatments of the body. There was significant choice about when and where Egyptian, Greek, and Roman elements could be used in Romano-Egyptian life and representation. These symbolic choices likely betray the identity of the user.

Functionally, there was much blending among the craftspeople who created domestic and funerary material and visual culture. The same workshop could produce objects with varying degrees of Greek or Egyptian representation, which suggests that differences in representational forms were acknowledged and even governed by certain rules of decorum (Riggs 2005, p. 97). For example, funerary mask gilders also decorated temples, and it seems likely that funerary portrait painters were also involved with mural painting in homes, civic buildings, and tombs, as well as in commemorative and cultic painting for use in houses or in public spaces, such as temples (Cannata 2012, p. 609). This overlap in craftspeople creates another strand of connection between disparate contexts.

In later Roman Egypt, being Egyptian, Greek, or Roman had become more of a cultural than an ethnic distinction. Moreover, it is clear that “Egyptian-ness,” “Greek-ness,” and “Roman-ness” no longer reflected contemporary social concerns. At the same time, gender, status, and locality continued to carry great significance. Thus, the mutable concept of “identity” is a more useful, multivalent aperture into self-perception in Roman Egypt than ethnicity alone. In contemporary Ptolemaic and Roman society, these components could be modeled and reformed to fit life-course needs as required by different groups. The life-course approach enables us to consider how various components of identity waxed and waned in different contexts of life and death. These approaches are most appropriate for the extant material, since each monument or class of object must be considered within its provenance and date (where these can be established), as well as in terms of how it was used and what it represents.

23.3 Housing Practices

Social archeology frequently targets the “household” as a unit of analysis in order to understand the lived experiences of individuals and groups. An archeology of domestic spaces interrogates the spatial locale in which people lived and the material practices that gave meaning to their life course. Children learned about social, religious, gender, and economic roles through their household interactions. Adults perpetuated traditions and participated in overarching social activities. The elderly often took on particularly key roles in religious practices. For this reason, houses allow us to explore the lived experiences of individuals, along with important life-course traditions.

Ptolemaic- and Romano-Egyptian households, as in many other societies, served as the residential center of production and consumption, social relations, and biological reproduction, and held an essential role in domestic and ritual functions (Allison 1999; Hendon 2004). The occupants of houses in Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt could include both family members and non-family members (Bagnall and Frier 2006), such as servants, slaves, tenants, and others. For this reason, the term “family” cannot be equated easily with the material remains of a house (Nevett 2011).

Ptolemaic- and Romano-Egyptian domestic archeology is still in the early stages of development, despite a long history of domestic excavation in Egypt. In particular, we have a considerable amount of information about houses from the first to fourth centuries AD from various parts of Egypt, but we do not have stable interpretations of this material, and we often lack desirable detail for exploring nuanced questions of identity.

Our current evidence of domestic architecture suggests that houses could range between more traditional pre-Ptolemaic house forms and Classical Mediterranean-style structures. Decorative motifs, portable objects, and food residues offer a similarly wide range of options for household consumption practices. Unfortunately, most previous excavations of houses segregated artifacts and architectural elements from their original contexts, with the result that only general statements can be made about domestic assemblages. In other words, due to both methodological and analytical constraints, it is not possible to explore the ways in which individual households combined architecture, portable objects, diet, and decoration. We can say very little about how individual households functioned in different socioeconomic groups, ethnic groups, regions, and so on. Moreover, we do not have a sufficient range of plans for excavated houses, which makes it difficult to determine the geographic spread, diachronic development, and prevalence of various house types (Boozer 2015b).

Moving from this fragmented picture to a detailed, nuanced, and contextual analysis will require the fuller publication of older excavations as well as the full publication of new ones. Despite having only a broad-strokes understanding of domestic life, we do have a number of sites from which we can begin to gather together data in order to understand the lived experiences of households in discrete regions and periods of Greco-Roman Egypt.

23.3.1 The Fayum: Karanis, Soknopaiou Nesos, Tebtynis, and Other Towns

Most prior research on Ptolemaic and Romano-Egyptian domestic contexts has taken place in Egypt’s Fayum region (Map 2). This region became a nexus for domestic studies due to the papyrological rescue missions led by Grenfell and Hunt in the early 1900s, which exposed numerous well-preserved houses (Grenfell et al. 1900). Because their primary objective was to salvage papyri, the resultant publications lack contextual and architectural data. Other excavations have taken place in the Fayum, but the robustness of their data varies considerably.

The University of Michigan excavated two of the most famous Fayum sites in the early twentieth century: Karanis (Kom Aushim) (1924–1934) and Soknopaiou Nesos (Dime) (1931–1932). The material recovered from these sites is invaluable for the

present study, since both produced a wealth of material data on domestic architecture and artifacts. Karanis has become the type-site of Romano-Egyptian domestic architecture, due to its high state of preservation and the care with which it was excavated compared to previous work on Romano-Egyptian houses. Since the 1930s, Karanis has appeared in numerous publications as a representative Romano-Egyptian settlement, but one should be wary about exploiting it too readily as the Romano-Egyptian domestic type-site (Boozer 2015b).

There are two major caveats that must be kept in mind when employing Karanis houses for comparanda. First, they have not been fully published, and this selectivity obscures the most common houses occupied by typical households. Second, the publications that do exist organize finds into material categories rather than contexts (e.g. individual houses). It is not possible to determine which types of objects, texts, and architectural features co-occurred or what the distribution of house types, objects, and texts looked like across the site, without consulting the Kelsey archives. A recent project has targeted specific areas of Karanis for re-excavation, as well as targeting excavations in new areas (Cappers et al. 2013). Re-excavation has revealed previously unpublished features, while new excavations have revealed more refined data on house types than were previously published, although the new structures have been found to be preserved only at foundation level. Finally, new research has argued that the chronologies established by the excavators for Karanis require significant down-dating (Pollard 1998; Cappers et al. 2013). It is also clear that level equivalences across the site are inconsistent (Boozer 2015a).

Broadly, the published evidence suggests that buildings at Karanis aligned into blocks of habitation (Husselman 1979, p. 10, maps 4–5). The houses that are described and drawn were predominately made of mud-brick, with only small amounts of wood (Husselman 1979, p. 34). Flat roofs were common, except in cellars, which were vaulted. Most houses were elongated and had multiple stories, with cooking taking place in courtyards that were either private or shared. The walls were often plastered and covered with a thin lime wash. A black wash was most common, with white accents painted horizontally across the mud-brick courses. Decorations were minimal, and were usually found in niches, often representing religious scenes, and typically painted in maroon and black (Husselman 1979, pp. 35–36, pls. 18, 19a, 21b, 22a, 24a, 24b, 25, 102a). The extraordinary range in recovered material culture provides evocative glimpses into trade relationships (amphorae), craftsmanship (painted pottery), daily life (miniatures, basketry, adornment, textiles, figurines, and so on), and diet (botanicals, fauna) (Gazda and Wilfong 2004).

Wilfong (2012, pp. 232–233) has argued that although practically none of the published material from the Michigan excavations reflects Egyptian culture, there are numerous unpublished representations that combine Egyptian and Greco-Roman visual expressions. This combination can be found among the statues, terracottas, murals, and other unpublished photographs, facsimiles, and objects from Karanis that are housed at the Kelsey Museum and in the Cairo Museum. For example, a recent re-examination of wall paintings in a large granary highlights the use of Egyptian gods for apotropaic purposes (Wilburn 2013).

The University of Michigan has also excavated houses at Soknopaiou Nesos. Only the coins, papyri, and specific architectural elements received attention in the single published

excavation report (Boak et al. 1935). The houses appear to have been built contiguously, and each had a courtyard to support domestic cooking needs. These structures were built directly onto bedrock. The largest house excavated had an internal courtyard (*aithrion*). All of the structures had a central-pillared stairway leading to upper floor(s), and often also to cellars. Poor-quality wall paintings were found in some of the structures (Boak et al. 1935, pp. 9–10, figures 4, 6, 7); these have been considered more “indigenous” than the ones from Karanis, but Soknopaiou Nesos, like Karanis, requires more refined re-evaluations in order to interpret these findings.

Other sites from Egypt’s Fayum region are even less well documented. Hawara, located at the entrance to the Fayum, is a particularly important site for Roman Egypt, although it is perhaps best-known for the pyramid of Amenemhet III (Twelfth Dynasty). Uytterhoeven’s new volume (2009) provides an excellent compendium on Hawara domestic and funerary data. Sadly, little can be made of the ruinous Romano-Egyptian domestic remains, except that they seem to have a square or rectangular footprint averaging less than 100 m² in area, with an adjoining exterior courtyard. These houses appear to have been multistoried, with only two or three rooms on the ground floor (Nowicka 1969, p. 115; Uytterhoeven 2009, esp. pp. 322–324).

Another Fayum site, Tebtynis (modern Tell Umm el-Bagarat), provides domestic comparanda for the Ptolemaic and Roman Periods, although there are significantly fewer published houses than from Karanis and Soknopaiou Nesos. Most Tebtynis houses date to the Late Ptolemaic and Early Roman Periods, and publications show a square plan. One house, which dates to approximately the first century BC through the first century AD, has a peristyle contained within it (Grimal 1995, pp. 590–591, figure 14; Hadji-Minaglou 1995; Davoli 1998, pp. 179–210; Hadji-Minaglou 2007, 2008, pp. 126–127, figure 4). These Fayum houses were again analyzed typologically, so it is not possible to connect finds, architectural features, and plans in order to reconstruct what each individual house looked like.

23.3.2 *Oxyrhynchos and Upper Egypt*

Moving to other regions in Egypt, we find a different range of fragmentary data on Ptolemaic and Romano-Egyptian houses. Oxyrhynchos (modern el-Bahnasa), located approximately 160 km south of modern Cairo, provides us with a wealth of papyri dating to the Ptolemaic and Roman Periods, revealing remarkable detail about the community that once resided there. The urban layout, domestic structures, and material remains are described also, although the publication of material remains is paltry.

Grenfell and Hunt initiated excavations at Oxyrhynchos between 1899 and 1907, as it suffered from *sebakhin* looting (Egyptian peasants who dug *sebakh*, fertile earth). Darbishire published a plan of the site in 1908, and later Petrie (2007) published one emphasizing the theater from his work in 1922. The houses are not well represented in these selective plans. A 1993 mission of the Islamic branch of the Supreme Council of Antiquities uncovered some Roman Period stone houses on the site (Padró 2007). These appear to corroborate textual evidence, which suggests that the wealthier houses were built of stone and the cheaper ones of sun-dried brick. Houses in the city sometimes ran to three stories, and normally were built with a cellar and a small courtyard (about 15 square yards)

containing a well. It seems that at least one house had a private bath (Turner 2007, pp. 144, 147). Even more opulent houses existed as well. The unique plan of one such house survives, showing three courtyards, one of which is called an *atrium*, which potentially contained an *impluvium* (P.Oxy. XXIV 2406) (Husson 1983, pp. 308–310; Bowman 2007a, p. 173). Recovered papyri also suggest that poorer strata were catered to, and that there were high apartment buildings (one is mentioned at seven stories in P.Oxy. XXXIV 2719, but this may be situated in Alexandria, Gasco 2012), as we know from other areas of the Roman Empire (e.g. Alexandria, Ostia, Rome) (for multiple-story buildings in villages and *metropoleis* as recorded in the papyri, see Husson 1983, pp. 259–263).

Other areas of Upper Egypt, such as Elephantine, have produced houses. Elephantine is an island in the middle of the Nile, part of modern-day Aswan in southern Egypt. Unfortunately, the results of the urban excavations are difficult to interpret because only portions of the domestic structures have been exposed (although see Arnold et al. 2003). According to the excavators, these houses were broadly similar to the excavated houses at Karanis.

23.3.3 *Alexandria and the Egyptian North Coast*

The north coast of Egypt provides us with several examples of Roman Mediterranean housing. Alexandria, the premier city in Roman Egypt – and one of the chief cities of the Roman Empire – is poorly visible to the archeologist today. Even so, the remains of villas and other elaborate housing structures that potentially contained workshops and apartments in a single structure have begun to be uncovered (Rodziewicz 1976, 1984). These structures have not been holistically explored, such that we can understand the architecture, artifacts, ecofacts, and textual data as a unit.

Marina el-Alamein (ancient Leukaspis or Antiphrae), a smaller Greco-Roman port town, produced several sumptuous dwellings. These houses contained a central court surrounded by two or three portico wings, while the smaller dwellings had just one wing of a single column. Typologically, these houses recall portico and peristyle houses of the Classical Mediterranean (Medeksza and Czerner 2003, p. 21). To date, these houses have not been fully published, although preliminary reports exist.

23.3.4 *The Western Desert*

Egypt's Western Desert contains a wealth of well-preserved domestic remains, which add considerably to the more fragmented data that we have from the Nile Valley and the Mediterranean coast. The Kharga Oasis has produced partial data on houses. Douch, located at the extreme southern edge of Kharga, contains a large number of domestic structures. Architecturally, these houses reflect Roman Mediterranean influences, as can be seen particularly in the use of inner peristyles and interior courts (see Reddé et al. 2004, pp. 25–74).

Recent work in the Dakhla Oasis has contributed a range of Roman Period houses from multiple sites, which have been excavated using modern techniques. Kellis (Ismant el-Kharab) provides an abundance of data on local Dakhlan domestic life. The site has undergone careful, contextual excavation since 1986, under the direction of Hope as part

of the Dakhla Oasis Project (DOP). At this stage, it is possible to summarize the Kellis houses on the basis of the numerous preliminary reports.

Roman Kellis domestic architecture typically consisted of a single-story structure with a barrel-vaulted roof. A staircase provided access to the roof, which was often used as additional work and storage space. Within the house, there was typically a central courtyard area surrounded by living- and workspaces, although some houses had rear courtyards in addition to or instead of the central one. Walls were mud-plastered and often contained strips of whitewash along the rear and around doorways and wall niches (Hope et al. 1989; Knudstad and Frey 1999). Presumably, this whitewash illuminated these dark spaces, particularly when lamps were placed in the niches.

A closer examination of the Kellis houses yields diachronic information on house development. Area B, in northern-central Kellis, primarily consists of extensive complexes. Area B dates from the first through third centuries AD and shows a continuous development of buildings, some of which were more formal than others. A sub-area contained within this zone, Kellis Area B3, contains lavishly decorated houses with bright geometric motifs. The B3 sub-area contains a series of large residences that may be contemporaneous, since they all share a north wall (Hope et al. 2006). Hope (2006) suggests that these Kellis residences contain architectural parallels to Roman atrium houses at Italian sites such as Pompeii, rather than drawing upon Egyptian architectural norms (he compares them to Pompeian houses, such as in Zanker 1998, pp. 135–156, 192–203).

House B/3/1, located in the eastern portion of Area B, has finds largely dating to the late first to early third centuries AD. It has a more Classical-style layout than is commonly associated with Egypt, and it has a clustered plan of access and a central open area (Room 1b) (Hope and Whitehouse 2006, p. 318; Hope et al. 2006, pp. 23–31; Hope 2007, p. 33). The organizing principle for this house was bifurcated around two rooms rather than one, which may have been an attribute of wealthier Dakhlan houses, if we compare it to Trimithis House B1 (Boozer 2015c, see later).

Area C is located in the far eastern extremity of Kellis and contains blocks of structures, as well as a visible furnace and kiln debris. The Area C structures date to the second and third centuries AD. These buildings drew upon Classical models in their arrangement, as indicated by the placement of living- and workspaces around a central open courtyard. Kellis House C/2/8 has a square plan, and the rooms are arranged around a central open courtyard. From the surface, Kellis House C/2/10 shares a similar square plan and central open courtyard, but it has not been fully excavated, and reconstructions must be tentative at this time. Area C at Kellis was a vernacular and industrial zone comparable to Area 1 at Trimithis. Structures from Area C tend to be uniform in plan (Hope et al. 2006, p. 29; Hope and Whitehouse unpublished, p. 1). The final publication of the Kellis houses promises to be groundbreaking.

Moving to the western portion of Kellis, known as Area A, we find churches, a bath house, and domestic structures. This area of the site is located just east of a cluster of temples, a church, and the western tombs. Hope's (1991, p. 41) team excavated a cluster of houses in Area A: single-story elongated structures dating to the late third to fourth century. Houses from this area contain well-preserved barrel-vaulted roofs over rooms surrounding a central open courtyard. House 3 has a central, open court (room 6), around which the unroofed stairs (room 7) and main barrel-vaulted living quarters

(rooms 2–5, 8–10) cluster (Hope 1991, pp. 41–42; Hope et al. 1989, p. 1, figure 1). Likewise, House 5 in Area A/9 dates to the fourth century, is somewhat elongated, and has a central room through giving access to other rooms, all of which were barrel-vaulted (Hope 2003, p. 238).

Trimithis (modern-day Amheida), located in the western portion of Dakhla, is a large city that appears to have been occupied consistently for many millennia. Systematic excavations there, directed by Bagnall, began in 2004, and two houses have been completed, along with portions of additional domestic and other structures. In the center of the site, as defined by the visible mapped footprint, House B1 appears to be consistent with Dakhla domestic norms. B1 was occupied for approximately 30 years in the fourth century AD, as suggested from current analyses of the ostraca and archeological deposition (Bagnall and Ruffini 2012). It has a clustered plan, with two rooms serving as major entry points to others. The wall paintings are particularly notable for their prominent representations of scenes from Classical mythology (Figure 23.1). Among the scenes, one features the personification of Polis, which is presumed to be Trimithis herself. A substantial corpus of ostraca suggests that one of the owners, Serenos, was a city councilor (Bagnall and Ruffini 2004). The correlation between his civic role and this representation strongly indicates the importance of this status for his identity within Trimithis (Boozer 2010).

House B2, located in the north-eastern portion of Trimithis, offers a simpler structure that dates to the late third and early fourth centuries AD (Boozer 2015c). Architecturally, House B2 also follows Dakhlan domestic norms, in that it has a dodged entrance, a clustered plan of access, and under-stairs storage areas (Figure 23.2). The recovered objects, architecture, and ostraca from this structure indicate a complicated intertwining of cultural influences. It is particularly notable that objects used primarily by women appear to have been more conservatively “Egyptian” in influence than those used by men (Boozer 2012). This differential entanglement of cultural influences suggests potential for exploring the overlap between ethnic affinity, gender, and economic stratum in future domestic excavations.

This overview of domestic evidence suggests the capacity for future work on identity in daily life. In particular, re-evaluations of significant sites (e.g. Karanis, Soknopaiou Nesos) could yield new insights into current, theoretically informed questions about individual identities. At this time, it appears that individual households adapted the multicultural material vocabulary at their disposal to suit their own needs. It seems possible, given data sets from Kellis, Trimithis, and Karanis, that more elite houses contained more “Classical” material and visual culture, and perhaps that men moved more toward Mediterranean norms than did women. The lived experiences of these individuals suggest fluidity between cultural signifiers as they relate to ethnicity, but also that rules of decorum influenced gender, age, and economic appropriations of these same signifiers.

23.4 Burial Practices

Moving to burial practices, we encounter different phases of the life course: death and the afterlife. We have considerably more evidence upon which to draw for these phases than for the lived phases of the life course. Egyptian funerary religion overwhelmingly dominates our view of ancient Egypt throughout all periods of its history. This dominance is



Figure 23.1 Polis from Trimithis (Amheida) House B1. Source: Image courtesy the Amheida Project.

due to selection bias in excavation, as well as the high preservation of the material culture recovered from burials and commemorative contexts. Despite this academic preoccupation with burials, it is clear that death and the afterlife were formative stages in contemporary perceptions of the life course. This significance is supported by documentary, material, and visual remains from the Ptolemaic and Roman Periods.

Death, as the ultimate rite of passage within the life course, carries particularly strong symbolism in Egypt. The pervasive belief in the afterlife created a reciprocal bond between the living and the dead: the living could offer prayers for the dead, and the dead could interact with the living (for good or evil). The Ptolemaic- and Romano-Egyptian burial marked one point within an elaborate sequence of mortuary rights performed upon the body, the tomb itself, and rituals among the living. Emphasis on the body as the site of divine transfiguration was integral to Egyptian conceptualizations of the cosmos, and in elite and pictorial representations, gods always assumed human or partly human forms (Hornung 1983, pp. 107–125).

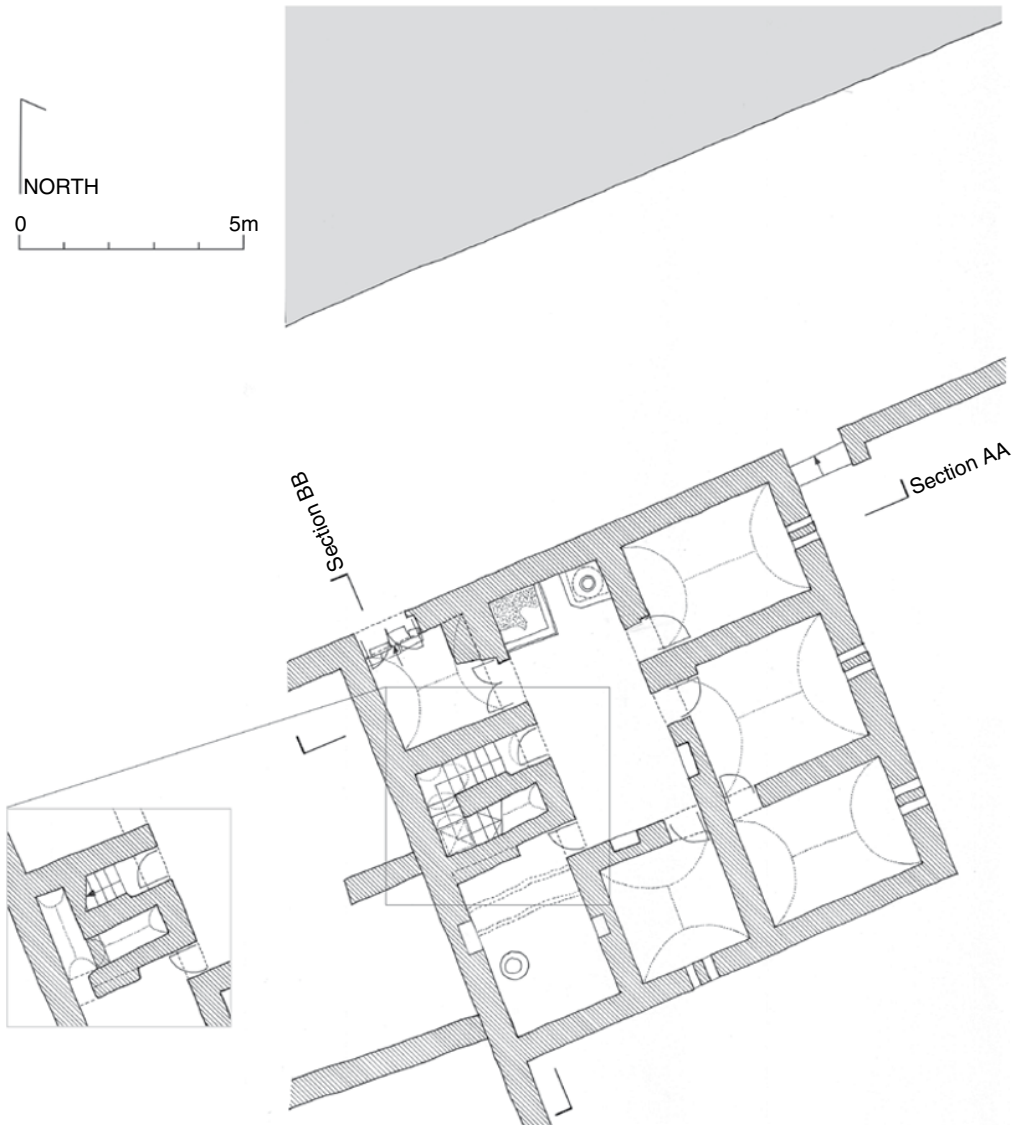


Figure 23.2 Plan of House B2, Trimithis (Amheida). Source: Image courtesy the Amheida Project.

Continuity seems to be a crucial feature of Egyptian funerary religion, and therefore a profound understanding of the longstanding burial traditions is necessary in order to unlock the meaning of burial practices in Greco-Roman Egypt. This archaism can be found in the textual tradition (Szcudłowska 1973; Smith 2006, pp. 16–7, 650–662; Assmann et al. 2008, pp. 227–498; Smith 2009; Stadler 2012a, 2016) as well as the funerary art (Riggs 2006, 2005) and architecture of Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt.

Despite the “timelessness” often found in Egyptian tombs, changes did occur. Identifying these changes and their significance is one of the key challenges to scholars of

Romano-Egyptian burials today (Riggs 2010). The complementarity of continuity and change can be seen in two trends in Romano-Egyptian mortuary practice: the reuse of extant tombs or sacred spaces and the combination of new funerary goods (e.g. shrouds) with older material (e.g. sarcophagi).

During the Roman Period, the preferred method of disposal for the dead remained corpse inhumation (Riggs 2005, p. 1). Moreover, there is evidence that mummification gained favor in this period among groups who might otherwise have used Greek forms of inhumation (Riggs 2010, p. 346). Standards of mummification did not “decline” in Roman Egypt, as has been asserted at times (e.g. using evidence from Douch in the Kharga Oasis and Kom el-Samak in Western Thebes). Instead, as in every period, there were varying standards of quality, which will have depended upon factors such as cost, materials, methods, and the skill of the embalmers (Riggs 2010, p. 345).

Unfortunately, we lack adequate textual evidence for the production of mummies, burial assemblages, and tombs in Roman Egypt. We do know that many artists seem to have worked in the back room or the courtyard (*auile*) of their house and lived in urban centers (Cannata 2012). Others seem to have been attached to temples, and still others to have traveled to find work, taking their tools with them in order to work on commissions (Ling 2000, p. 101). These working conditions suggest strong ties between what modern-day scholars might consider to be different genres of art among domestic, funerary, and temple contexts.

Of the arts employed in Romano-Egyptian funerary material culture, the so-called “mummy portraits” are among the most famous (Walker and Bierbrier 1997). In addition, we have painted shrouds, cartonnage masks, mummy cases, the human remains themselves (mummified, un-mummified, and cremated), and other associated funerary arts and objects (Riggs 2002, 2010, p. 351). Many more varieties of mummy masks were created in the Roman Period than in prior phases, along with additional new accoutrements. This vast repertoire of material remains enables a multifaceted exploration of mortuary practices and beliefs in Roman Egypt. Much like in houses, the intertwining of various traditions within a single interment suggests that our own divisions between modes of self-representation may not be appropriate (Riggs 2002, p. 95). Such material suggests the value of close contextual scrutiny of burial assemblages.

The synchronic representation of Egyptian, Greek, and Roman motifs is complex and, despite a lengthy research history, still not well understood. Castiglione (1961) famously described a “*dualité du style*” for the tombs he examined. This “double style” or “hybrid style” has permeated the literature over the years. The complex combination of influences is certainly correct, but the catch-all term employed is descriptive rather than explanatory of the wide range of combinations that could occur between Egyptian, Greek, and Roman influences. In most dual-system objects or monuments, the figure of the deceased follows Hellenic norms and fills a prominent position (Riggs 2002, p. 97), but we cannot yet fully unpack the various associations with different cultural signifiers within tombs. Unfortunately, only a handful of decorated tombs have been adequately excavated and recorded, so we can say little about decorative interactions between periods (Borchardt 1913; von Bissing 1926; Kaplan 1999; Yamani 2001).

At this stage, we can suggest that funerary art contains “survivals” and “revivals” of the past, as well as “innovations” (Riggs 2010, pp. 348–349). The funerary art of Roman

Egypt, like the burials themselves, comfortably deployed standard pharaonic symbolism alongside more novel and contemporary iconography, since diverse forms were relevant, meaningful, and understood (Stadler 2004; Riggs 2005, p. 33). The visual duality that could take place in funerary art proved to be highly effective and was an enduring component of commemoration and display.

Gender differentiation appears to have been significant during the Roman Period, and there was an increase in the variety of ways that genders were represented. Funerary texts and visual representations suggest that there was an increased concern with individualizing the deceased by maintaining the gendered role, identity, and body that they had assumed in society into the afterlife (Riggs 2005, p. 41). Dead males were associated with Osiris (Smith 2006) and dead females with Hathor (Smith 2005, p. 88). This gendered association was marked both through funerary literature and through object inscription and representation (Riggs 2002, p. 96; Smith 2006, 2009, pp. 1–10). The imagery used for Romano-Egyptian women was more wide-ranging than for men (Riggs 2005, p. 103). It also seems to have been more permissible to represent a girl or a woman with a blend of Egyptian, Greek, and Roman elements than it was for a man (Riggs 2005, p. 125).

Although Riggs shows that some of the imagery associated with women may be new to the Roman Period, Smith has shown that the link between a deceased male and Osiris was longstanding. These associations between the deceased and a particular divinity resulted in the deceased assuming the role of a devotee. “Connectivity” was an important organizing principle in Egyptian thought about the human body and society (Assmann 2001, pp. 430–431) – and also, apparently, death (Smith 2006, p. 336). This principle appears to have extended into the Roman Period.

Locality continued to be important during the Greco-Roman Period, as the excavation of cemeteries reveals great diversity in local practice. These locales show various options for the use of space, tomb decoration, and treatment of the body. The Roman Period preference for using older burial grounds reflects the ways in which cemetery space served to mediate between communities and the landscape, and formed a significant aspect of traditional burial practice. This reuse of space could take two forms. First, cemeteries might be expanded to include later phases of burials. Second, it was possible to reuse tombs from earlier periods in order to enliven the dead in previously hallowed ground (Riggs 2010, p. 347). This fluidity between continuity and change appears to characterize the burial evidence at our disposal. We now turn to some of the local examples of burial practices, to show the geographic range in traditions.

23.4.1 *Alexandria*

The necropolis and funerary architecture of Alexandria has a long history of research (e.g. Schreiber et al. 1908; Breccia 1912; Pagenstecher 1919; Venit 2016). The most well-known sites are the Hellenistic Shatbi, Sidi Gaber, Mustafa Pasha, and Anfushi, and from the later Roman Periods, Gabbari, Mex, and the catacombs of Kom al-Shuqafa (Bonacasa 2002). The monumental tombs of Alexandria are the best preserved of all the ancient monuments from this famous city. There is only one tomb, the Alabaster Tomb, in the eastern part of the city, that is in the Macedonian style. It is the only preserved tomb that was built above ground and covered with a tumulus. It must have been a royal monument (Venit 2002,

pp. 8–9), being located within the vicinity of the palaces but outside of the city walls (Grimm 1996, p. 60).

Most of the Alexandrene tombs were cut deeply into the nummulitic limestone that underlies the city. Although these tombs draw upon Egyptian traditions, with their loculi and open courts, the architectural details come primarily from a Classical repertoire taken from daily life (Venit 2012, p. 116). Despite this Classical influence, Egyptian iconographic motifs make a strong appearance (Venit 2002, figure 41).

The Roman Period tombs of Alexandria continued the general Ptolemaic tomb layout, but substituted a *triclinium*-shaped chamber for the *kline* (couch)-room found in their predecessors. With respect to decorative motifs, the Roman tombs contain a richer range of Egyptian decorative details than do the Ptolemaic ones (Venit 1997, 1999, 2002, pp. 124–145), indicating the increased mixture between these cultural elements. The myth of the Rape of Persephone is particularly prevalent among these tombs (Guimier-Sorbets and Seif el-Din 1997).

23.4.2 *Middle Egypt and Tuna el-Gebel*

Moving up the Nile, we find more evidence of cultural entanglement, although the character of this intermixing varies depending upon the locality, as well as diachronic changes. Recent research at Tuna el-Gebel reveals that it is the largest known Greco-Roman necropolis in Egypt (Lembke 2012a, p. 207), much of it dating to the Roman Period. A large part remains unexcavated.

Ptolemaic tombs at Tuna el-Gebel show a striking combination of Greek and Egyptian iconography in different styles (Lefebvre 1924; Gabra and Drioton 1954, pl. 1). There is evidence for the Greek custom of cremation at early Roman Tuna el-Gebel, in the form of objects that may be interpreted as urns and recesses in the interior of tomb pillars that are too small to contain mummies (Lembke 2010b, figure 15; 2012a, p. 213); this adds to previous arguments that cremation was sometimes employed at this site (Bernand 1969, pp. 377–386, no. 97; 1999, pp. 160–162, no. 71; it is worthwhile noting that Petrie 2007 thought he saw signs of cremation in the tombs he examined at Oxyrhynchos in 1922).

In the Roman Period, three different types of tomb were used: stone “temples,” “houses” of mud-brick, and tomb pillars built out of stone or mud-brick (Lembke 2010b, p. 234, 236). In addition, some of the Roman tombs were composed of both mud-brick and local nummulitic limestone (e.g. M 11/SS, Lembke 2012a, p. 210; also Lembke et al. 2007, pp. 80–81, figure 7). The combination of mud-brick architecture and a house-like character led Gabra to term these tombs “houses” (Gabra et al. 1941), since Egyptians traditionally used stone for tombs and mud-brick for domestic architecture. There is no absolute binary in building materials, however, as the pyramid chapels at New Kingdom Deir el-Medina (among other sites) employed mud-brick in a mortuary context. We also have seen the use of stone for house construction at Oxyrhynchos. Most of the Tuna el-Gebel tombs have two rooms, while most of the later stone-built tombs have only one (Lembke 2012a, p. 210). During the Roman Period, temple-tombs dating to the Ptolemaic era were reused, sometimes with new epitaphs added (Lembke 2012a, p. 209).

Some early Roman house tombs show a dominant Egyptian style (Gabra et al. 1941, pls. 10–14, 15.1, 15.2, 16, 16.1, 17.1, 17.2; Riggs 2005, pp. 129–139). One, T 5/SS, dating to AD 100 offers a particularly intriguing combination of a Greek façade and an Egyptian-style interior (Lembke and Wilkening-Aumann 2012). This site is also home to a pyramidal tomb, which has been termed “Egypt’s last pyramid” (Kessler et al. 2008), although the pyramidal tombs at Trimithis are later in date. The decoration of the Tuna el-Gebel tombs increasingly begins using Classical iconography from the first century AD onward (Lembke 2012a, p. 214). This becomes particularly dominant from the second to third centuries AD, and often draws from Classical mythology (Gabra and Drioton 1954, pls. 4, 12, 14–16, 21–22; Lembke et al. 2007, p. 83, figure 15): Oedipus, the Trojan Horse, the Oresteia, and the Rape of Persephone are well represented (Gabra and Drioton 1954, pls. 14–16). These myths can be found depicted in villas and are also familiar from funerary contexts in other regions of Egypt, such as the Kom el-Shuqafa catacomb in Alexandria (Lembke 2012a, p. 219).

In the later tombs, Egyptian-themed decoration is rare, and is often limited to a single scene (Riggs 2005, pp. 130–131; Lembke 2012a, p. 218). Moreover, the stone temple tombs, as well as the tomb houses, increasingly do not cover the mummies in shafts, but present them openly on a couch or *kline*. This practice indicates the increasing influence of Roman ideas upon mortuary habits, as it does not fit with the Egyptian tradition of hiding the body to preserve it for eternity (Lembke 2012a, p. 216).

The objects associated with these tombs suggest that annual food and drink festivals took place from the Early Ptolemaic until the Late Roman Period (Lembke et al. 2007; Helmbold-Doyé 2010, pp. 134–135; for food and drink in mortuary contexts, see Lembke 2010a; for a critique of Lembke’s argument, see Stadler 2016). Egyptian offering tables and funerary service objects also have been found at the site, suggesting that traditional Egyptian practices were also possible (Lembke 2012a, p. 219).

23.4.3 Upper Egypt

Moving farther up the Nile into Upper Egypt, we have yet more suggestions that locality had a strong influence upon burial practices. The Theban region was marked by conservatism and a strong local identity, which may have resulted in a level of resistance against the Alexandrian government during the Ptolemaic Period (Blasius 2002; von Recklinghausen 2007; Stadler 2012b, pp. 18–19; see Chapter 3).

Mortuary practices at Thebes regularly show strong conventional tendencies, even while other areas of Egypt experienced limited changes under Roman rule (Łajtar 2012, p. 182). This traditionalism can be traced through an ongoing emphasis upon pharaonic Egyptian traditions (Stadler 2010–2011, 2012b, p. 144). A persistent element of Theban burial practices in the Roman Period is the secondary use of earlier Middle Kingdom through Late Period rock-cut tombs and the adaptation of older funerary material. Some of these reused areas are found in tombs (Kákossy 1995; Riggs 2003, pp. 191–195), others in the basements of abandoned houses (Montserrat and Meskell 1997, pp. 186–193; Riggs 2003, pp. 195–198, 2005, pp. 205–217). The material culture and texts also show signs of conservatism (Riggs 2006). For example, burials in Thebes were more likely to include funerary papyri than were burials elsewhere in Roman Egypt (Riggs 2005; Stadler 2010–2011, 2012b, p. 144), which shifted away from this traditional practice.

Not much remains of ancient Antinoopolis, although its grid layout and some of its occupational history are clear. Fortunately, Gayet, a French archeologist, worked at Antinoopolis for many years in the early twentieth century, examining numerous graves dating from the third to fifth centuries (Calament 2005). These burials included painted shrouds and very fine shaped wooden mummy portraits, which are worthy of mention (Aubert et al. 2008, pp. 169–227, 264–270, 275–278, 285–295, 298–308). Shrouds were used for the first time in the Roman Period, and the presence of these innovations in Antinoopolis is notable given the conservatism in the area. Large sheets of linen with painted decoration were used to envelop the mummy completely. Their flat surface offered the artist and viewer an additional space for decoration (Parlasca 1966, pp. 107–108, 167, 251, pl. 1, 57; Bresciani 1996, pp. 35–59; Aubert and Cortopassi 1998, p. 123, no. 73, p. 63, no. 20; see also Uytterhoeven 2009).

23.4.4 *The Western Desert*

As with the domestic evidence discussed previously, the Western Desert provides well-preserved and intriguing new evidence of mortuary identity in Greco-Roman Egypt. The tomb of Petosiris in Qaret el-Muzawwaqa (Dakhla Oasis) is one of the best preserved decorated tombs from all Roman Egypt (Osing et al. 1982; Whitehouse 1998), and also one of the best-known sites in the Dakhla Oasis. It dates to the first century AD, on the basis of Demotic graffiti (Osing et al. 1982, p. 102). The full-length portraits of a figure presumed to be Petosiris reference a Greek, rather than a Roman cultural identity (Figure 23.3). It was not uncommon for men of Petosiris' social status to wear Greek clothing (compare Chapter 19). It also seems that women followed Greek dress fashions at this time. The tomb of Petubastis, located next door, also has lavish decorations. The surrounding rock-cut tombs at Qaret el-Muzawwaqa are primarily single chambers devoid of decoration (Whitehouse 1998; for the tombs of Petosiris and Petubastis, see also Chapter 34).

The DOP excavated multiple cemeteries associated with Ismant el-Kharab (Kellis). Some burials are located to the north of the settlement, on either side of the wadi that runs from the north-east to the west (Hope 1988, p. 162). The West Cemetery consists of a large number of small-chambered tombs dating to the Ptolemaic and Early Roman Periods. The East Cemetery, which is situated on a broad plain east of the wadi, consists of simple rectangular pit graves cut into the red Nubian clay, which date to the late third to early fourth century AD (Birrell 1999, p. 29). Some of these retain mud-brick superstructures and enclosure walls (Mills 1982, p. 99).

The West Cemetery contained a substantial number of mummified bodies with heads oriented to the west. Many of these bodies had painted and gilded cartonnage masks, one of which most certainly references the god Tutu, who was the principle deity of the Main Temple of Kellis (Birrell 1999, p. 38). The bodies of the East Cemetery were simply wrapped in linen cloth, and few of the graves contained artifacts (Birrell 1999, p. 41; for more on cartonnage from the Kellis cemeteries, see Schweitzer 2002).

Of particular note is North Tomb 1, which is the largest tomb found in any of the cemetery groupings (Hope 2003). This tomb was published in brief by two earlier



Figure 23.3 Tomb of Petosiris, Qaret el-Muzawwaqa. Source: Institute for the Study of the Ancient World, Creative Commons.

archeologists (Moritz 1900, pp. 466–471; Winlock 1936, pp. 20–21, pls. XI–XIII), but has been re-examined by the DOP. It has only one room built out of stone, which was painted in pharaonic style; the rest is built of mud-brick and was decorated with Classical-style painted plaster. The tomb dates to the early second century AD, on the basis of stylistic comparisons (Kaper 2003b). The skeletal remains were found to be highly disturbed, but it is estimated that there were 35 burials consisting of 20 adults and 15 juveniles (Dupras and Tocheri 2003, pp. 197–199). Many of these disturbances may be due to Christian reuse of the tombs in this area (Hope 2003).

A Ptolemaic and Roman necropolis was found in Bahariya Oasis in 1995; over 30 tombs were exposed once excavations began in 1999. These tombs are known as the “Valley of the Golden Mummies” because some of the mummies were gilded in a thin layer, while others were covered in decorated cartonnage. Still others were found inside anthropoid

coffins or wrapped with linen. The tombs themselves usually consisted of an entrance, a delivery room, and two burial chambers (Hawass 2000). The iconography on the cartonnage and the portable objects found with the bodies primarily references pharaonic gods and mythologies.

Douch, in the Kharga Oasis, provides us with unparalleled physical evidence of a single village in Greco-Roman Egypt, with nearly 800 individuals examined in the published reports. Results suggest close connections with the Nile Valley and a potentially poor diet, which resulted in stunted growth. Of note is that the temples and funerary practices of Douch maintained traditional religious cults (Dunand et al. 1992; Dunand and Lichtenberg 1995, 1998; Dunand et al. 2002), which may reflect the longstanding connections between the oases and Thebes, a conservative bastion (see earlier). The mummification techniques employed at Douch were generally poor.

In summation, the published tombs indicate strong regionalization with respect to the degree of conservatism and transformation that burials experienced under Ptolemaic and Roman rule. This regionalism is reminiscent of that found in temples, which is logical given the close relationship between mortuary ritual and religion. Transformation appears to have been more common in particular regions, as well as among women. While men seem to have been more often represented as Greek or Roman, women frequently contained a complex intertwining of visual systems. These rules of decorum indicate stronger differences between male and female representations than between different ethnics.

23.5 Conclusion

The concept “identity” is a useful aperture into self-perception in Greco-Roman Egypt, since being Egyptian, Greek, or Roman had become an indicator of culture and status, rather than a simple ethnic distinction. A life-course approach enables us to explore how various components of identity waxed and waned in different contexts of life and death. These approaches are most appropriate for the material, since each monument or class of object must be considered in its provenance and date (where these can be established), as well as in terms of how it was used and what it represented. Moreover, it is clear that the simplified conceptions of “Egyptian-ness,” “Greek-ness,” and “Roman-ness” that we perceive in the past do not reflect contemporary divisions in society. In Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt, these components could be modeled and reformed to fit life-course needs as required.

Material and visual culture – alongside architecture – changes meanings between life-use and death-use. It is impossible to understand the meanings of the Ptolemaic and Romano-Egyptian material worlds unless we can trace this change fully. By joining together the worlds of life and death, we begin to see some potential trends that would be worthy of future explorations into cultural identity.

Architecture and objects associated with life-course rituals are prime candidates for memorialization: they become connected with an identity, person, time, and place, and represent status transitions. The materiality of houses and tombs represented longevity and the temporal connections between past, present, and future in Ptolemaic and Roman

Egypt. The transfer of items between the household and the burial site may indicate meanings and properties that ancient peoples considered to be inherent in them. They could be connected with life-transforming events, or could also serve as conduits for actions within the Ptolemaic and Romano-Egyptian life course (Gell 1998).

Funerary contexts show more connections, broadly speaking, to pharaonic traditions than do houses. The reason for this traditionalism may vary by region, but it could have to do with conservative ideals related to death or a strong association between death and pharaonic imagery (Stadler 2016). Egypt was often considered to be synonymous with death in the ancient world (as it is in the present day), which may have encouraged the use of Egyptian symbols in mortuary contexts.

It seems that men are more frequently represented with “Mediterranean” attributes in both life and death, particularly among the upper echelons of society. By contrast, women appear to have taken on more traditional or blended aspects in their cultural affinities. In the life sphere, domestic objects relating to protection and cooking often show similarities to long-term practices in Egypt. In death, women show a more fluid range of styles than do men. Data on the various ages of gendered groups are difficult to come by, although it would certainly be worthy of additional study to determine how children and the elderly expressed cultural affinities. Naturally, these suggestions may be altered with future fine-grained explorations of both life and death worlds. Fortunately, there is every reason to believe that recent trends toward exploring cultural identity will continue, and will promote new understandings.

FURTHER READING

Davoli (1998, pp. 73–116, in Italian) summarizes research on Fayum settlements, as well as some of the issues with the University of Michigan methodologies and publication practices. For an overview of the documentary and archeological research at Oxyrhynchos, see papers in Bowman et al. (2007). More research on the material remains from Oxyrhynchos is certainly possible. The Dakhleh Oasis Project (DOP) has numerous publications available, which provide both preliminary and more finalized perspectives on finds (see www.amheida.org and <http://artsonline.monash.edu.au/ancient-cultures/excavations-in-dakhleh-oasis-egypt>). An excellent starting place for an examination of the material remains of Romano-Egyptian burials is Riggs’ exemplary volume (2005), as well as her numerous articles. Smith’s volume, *Traversing Eternity* (2009), provides a comprehensive introduction to the textual aspects of burial traditions. Venit’s (2016) volume, *Visualizing the Afterlife in the Tombs of Graeco-Roman Egypt*, presents an updated, well-researched, and lavishly-illustrated guide to tombs from Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

A Sound Body and Mind

Amin Benaissa and Sofie Remijssen

“Weep for me, passer-by, Dioskoros son of Hellas, wise in the arts of the Muses and a new Herakles” (I.Métriques 82). In late Roman Alexandria, this epitaph mourned the premature death of a promising young man. The relief supported the identification of the bright lad as a new Herakles, depicting him with a naked muscular body, crowned by a thin victory wreath in a fronton. If only he had lived longer, the epitaph implies, Dioskoros would have made it in the world, for he excelled both intellectually and physically. The double cultural ambition his family harbored for him was not unique. Attention to both intellectual and physical attainments in the education of future generations is evident already in the Zenon archive of the third century BC and persists into Late Antiquity, not only in Alexandria, but also in the towns and villages of Egypt on which this chapter will primarily focus (e.g. P.Lond. VII 1941; P.Oxy. III 471.112–115; P.Flor. III 382; Isidorus Pelusiota, *Epistulae* 1671). These complementary cultural ideals can be observed in the public self-promotion of the elite, in institutionalized settings, and in expressions of private emotions and ambitions. Only a fraction of the population, however, could realize the ideals of elite self-representation: for the majority, a sound body and mind remained always out of reach. This chapter will set the pursuit of literary culture and a fit body by the more fortunate layers of Egyptian society side by side with the place of literacy and health in daily life.

24.1 Literacy in Everyday Life

The written word was ubiquitous in Greco-Roman Egypt, whether in the form of Hieroglyphic inscriptions on temple walls, tax receipts on pottery shards, deluxe papyrus rolls of Greek poetry, government registers of property, marriage contracts, or magical

love spells. Before the Greco-Roman Period, Egypt already boasted a long and venerable scriptorial tradition, which was principally upheld by the royal and priestly elite and a scribal sub-elite (Baines 1983). After Alexander's conquest, Egyptian priests and scribes continued to cultivate their written art in its three scripts (Hieroglyphic, Hieratic, Demotic) in order to copy or create new literary works, draw up legal documents, administer certain institutions, and inscribe their temples with religious texts. The Greeks brought with them their own literate traditions, which formed an important part of their cultural identity and were already well embedded in the political life of Greek city-states. Greek writing became more diffused than its Egyptian counterpart, because of its connection with the new ruling power, the growing volume of Greek administrative, financial, and legal documents, and (debatably) its easier alphabetic character. As a result, the use of Demotic for legal documents waned and eventually ceased in the first century of Roman rule (Lewis 1993; Depauw 2003; see Chapter 12); however, the writing of Egyptian in the traditional scripts continued apace within priestly circles until the early third century, as is testified by the rich finds of temple libraries in the Fayum (Ryholt 2005) and the several new Hieroglyphic temple inscriptions of the Roman Period (Klotz 2012). The third century saw the establishment of a new way of writing Egyptian using Greek letters, which we now know as Coptic. It was initially employed primarily for recording Christian works and for correspondence in monastic contexts, but began to be adopted for legal texts in the late sixth century (Fournet 2010; Förster et al. 2012; for the languages and scripts, see further Chapter 31).

Given the traditional importance and widespread uses of written records in Greco-Roman Egypt, knowledge of reading and writing can be assumed to have been a valuable skill and a prestigious cultural attainment. Collections of Greek maxims used in schools, for example, often valorize the material and intellectual benefits of literacy, although they are naturally biased toward it: "letters are the best start in life"; "firm reason belongs to the one who knows letters"; "learn letters and you shall have fine prospects"; "the one who knows letters has a superior mind" (Morgan 1998, pp. 130–131; examples from P.Bour. 1.169–70; Hagedorn and Weber 1968, lines 34–35, 57–58; P.Mon.Epiph. II 615.27). The preceding assumption is largely correct, but requires some qualifications. First, although there is no way of precisely quantifying literacy rates, it is clear that literacy was relatively restricted in proportion to the whole population (Harris 1989), and its extent varied significantly between different social and professional groups (e.g. priests, bankers, soldiers), between city and village (Bagnall 1993a, pp. 240–251), by language, by gender, and probably by period (e.g. Wipszycka 1996, pp. 107–135). Greco-Egyptian society was therefore highly "literate" in the wider sense of making ample use of documentation and relying heavily on writing for its functioning, but the number of individuals with the competence to read and write was still limited by our standards. Written records, whether legal or religious, continued to have symbolic power or practical value for their owners, even if they could not themselves produce or read them.

The reliance of a large pool of illiterates on a smaller core of literate experts leads to the second important qualification, which also highlights a major difference from modern values attached to literacy: namely, that illiterates and semi-literates (or "slow writers," as they are called in the papyri) were not socially handicapped, stigmatized, or embarrassed by their condition, except perhaps among the upper elite, and literacy was not considered

an absolutely indispensable skill (Youtie 1973, pp. 611–651; Hanson 1991; Kraus 2000). It is telling that some legal positions of responsibility, such as guardianship of women or minors, did not have literacy as a prerequisite. Illiterates were not debarred from having frequent recourse to documents in order to transact business or communicate with state authorities through scribes or networks of literate relatives, friends, and neighbors (Youtie 1981, pp. 179–199). Literacy, naturally, would still have conferred an advantage on those who possessed it and made them less vulnerable to exploitation. In the petition P.Oxy. I 71, col. i (AD 303), for instance, a municipal ex-chief priest complains that he was cheated out of a deposit because he was illiterate. Some advertised their literacy with pride and a sense of accomplishment, such as Aurelia Thaisous alias Lolliane in her petition to the prefect of Egypt (P.Oxy. XII 1467, AD 263), or various people subscribing in painfully “slow” hands (when they could have had recourse to a substitute), suggesting that it did carry some prestige even if it was barely mastered.

Rather than conceptualize literacy as a unitary phenomenon, it is better to think of “literacies,” given the variety of uses of the written word and its varying degrees of attainment (Thomas 2009). At the basic level is “functional” literacy, the ability to use a minimum amount of writing for a definite practical purpose. This did not require great proficiency in writing (and sometimes hardly any in reading), but simply the ability to draw one’s name or a few words in subscriptions to certain legal documents. The labored and “alphabetic” hands of these “slow writers” resemble those of beginner students in school papyri, tablets, and ostraca, which illustrate vividly the mechanics by which children learned to write Greek (Cribiore 1996). Evidently, if they had any formal schooling at all, “slow writers” did not have the privilege of progressing beyond the classroom of the “teacher of letters” (*grammatodidaskalos*), the lowest of the three traditional rungs of Greek education (Cribiore 2001, chapter 6). Students at this level were in fact taught to write (by practicing tracing their names and by copying sentences, maxims, and brief passages, often from literary classics) even before developing reading proficiency, providing those who quit schooling very early a minimal familiarity with writing that allowed them to be functional literates in their adult lives (Cribiore 2001, pp. 167–172, 176–178). Predictably, the social level of the “slow writers” is more diverse than that of more practiced writers, although that is not to say that there was always a strict correlation between wealth or status and literacy (cf. e.g. P.Oxy. I 71).

At the other end of the spectrum we find those who may be called broadly “professional” literates, individuals for whom extensive use and mastery of writing were essential for their functions. This was the domain of scribes, secretaries, and clerks (most of them anonymous), who drew up contracts in notarial offices, drafted documents and accounts in government bureaus, or copied literary texts for wealthy patrons. Estate administrators, business agents, bankers, and similar may also be counted in this group. Members of these professions often achieved a high proficiency in reading and writing (and often in numeracy as well), and developed specialized techniques and styles of writing (e.g. Johnson 2004). Their technical training after the elementary level is not well documented, partly because the hand of a trainee or apprentice scribe cannot be easily identified as such. It is also likely that the scribal profession was often hereditary, so that much of the instruction was imparted from father to son and thus remains invisible. There survive, however, a number of copies of model documents, often generic or

fictitious, or of isolated formulas (dating, legal, epistolary, etc.) that reflect the kind of training professional scribes would have received (P.Rain. Unterricht 61–113; P.Rain. Unterricht Kopt.; Haines-Eitzen 2000; Bucking 2007; UPZ I, pp. 474–475). A contract in which a former *kosmetes* of Oxyrhynchos apprentices a slave to a shorthand writer for two years provides another rare glimpse into their formation (P.Oxy. IV 724, AD 155; cf. also P.Oxy. XLI 2988).

Such “professional” Greek literacy was one avenue available to Egyptians by which to enter the state administration and thereby hold positions of modest influence and standing outside the priesthood (Pestman 1978; Clarysse 1993; Thompson 1994). Indeed, many scribes and lower-level officials in the Early Ptolemaic Period appear to be literate in both Greek and Egyptian, and there is some evidence that the early Ptolemaic state encouraged the teaching of Greek specifically to Egyptians by exempting their teachers from the poll (“salt”) tax (Clarysse and Thompson 2006, 2, pp. 127–129). Instruction in Greek writing is also attested in the environment of Egyptian temples in the Roman Period, the best example being the second-century ostraca of Narmouthis (O.Narm., O.Narm.Dem.). In Late Antiquity, Coptic was often taught side by side with Greek (Cribiore 1999; Bucking 2012). Egyptian literacy, however, did not always imply Greek literacy. Subscriptions to some documents reveal writers of Egyptian, invariably priests, who are said to be unable to write Greek (SB I 5117.6 = P.Dime III 29, AD 55; P.Tebt. II 383.57–8, AD 46). A church lector in the early fourth century, who is paradoxically described as “illiterate,” may have been so only in Greek and capable of reading the scriptures in Coptic (P.Oxy. XXXIII 2673; for a different interpretation see Wipszycka 1996, pp. 415–426). The reverse phenomenon of Greeks learning the Egyptian script(s) must have been much rarer, but is attested once in the Ptolemaic Period at least (UPZ I 148 with Rémondon 1964; the case of Ptolemaios and Apollonios in the Memphis Serapeum archive is more ambiguous: Legras 2011, pp. 231–239; for this archive, see Chapter 30).

Most office-holders and liturgists will also have required a degree of literacy to fulfill their duties, but virtually illiterate village officials are not unknown from the Roman Period, as the notorious case of Petaus “the village scribe who could not write” demonstrates (Youtie 1973, pp. 677–695); even he, however, could just about add his signature to documents, and was thus sufficiently “functional” to perform his role. In any case, officials like Petaus relied on a team of scribes and clerks to draft the plethora of accounts and documents expected from them. P.Mich. XI 603 (AD 134), a contract engaging nine scribes to make copies of population registers on behalf of two city officials, provides apposite illustration of this practice.

24.2 Elite Literacy and Literary Education

Between the “slow” writers and the professional scribes was a broad continuum of literate competence. This encompasses the more idiosyncratic but often assured and practiced hands we encounter in many private letters, household accounts, and personally copied literary works. Such hands belong to those who had the means and good fortune to progress beyond the class of the *grammatodidaskalos* (“teacher of letters”) to the study of

literature, which provided them with an opportunity to further refine their penmanship. A number of them can be said to possess what may be termed “elite” or “cultural” literacy, which was the preserve of the more privileged and educated strata of society, for whom literacy was a gateway to Greek culture and literary traditions, and thereby an essential component of Greek identity. Such culturally literate people could of course – and sometimes did – write their own letters or copy literary works themselves, but the value of their literacy did not reside in this, since many were wealthy enough to have or to hire secretaries or scribes for these purposes (Mugridge 2010; cf. SB XX 14599; P.Oxy. XLIV 3197). The crucial element was the ability to consume, interiorize, and display (e.g. through creative composition) literary culture, with all its associations of prestige and power.

The great value placed on literary education is clear from the correspondence between parents and children when the latter were studying away from home, in which their schooling is a constant subject of interest and a central cause for concern (Legras 1999, pp. 34–46; Cribiore 2001, pp. 102–123, 215–219). Besides its role in reinforcing cultural identity and social differentiation, and in inculcating certain key values, such an education conferred on its beneficiaries a facility in writing and persuasive speaking that would have been valuable for careers in public administration, governance, and law. In Late Antiquity especially, literary ability became an important currency in social advancement, and Egypt was particularly notable for the number of “poet officials” it produced, who often rose to prominent positions in the imperial hierarchy (Cameron 1965, with the correctives of Cameron 2007; Miguélez Caverio 2008, chapter 1). To give just one example among many, the fifth-century poet Cyrus of Panopolis reached the office of praetorian prefect, the highest civilian post in the administration of the Eastern Roman Empire, and was even briefly consul. At a much lower level, and a century later, Dioskoros of Aphrodito exploited his literary culture to compose poems in praise of various local dignitaries in the hope of obtaining favors; he also put his rhetorical education to use when he worked for some time as a notary in the provincial capital of Antinoopolis and when he traveled to Constantinople to defend the cause of his native town (Fournet 1999; for Dioskoros’ archive, see Chapter 25). Earlier, especially in the third century AD, gifted students had opportunities to display their literary talents in poetry competitions during festivals and games, which traditionally ran parallel to athletic contests, thereby gaining honor and renown – and in some cases, material privileges such as tax exemption – for themselves and their cities (e.g. SEG XVIII 716; P.Oslo III 189; P.Oxy. XXII 2338 with Coles 1975; cf. P.Oxy. LXIII 4352, introduction). Poets from Egypt, however, did not make as much of an impact as athletes at the highest-level “international” contests (cf. Stephanis 1988), with the notable exception of the infamous scholar-poet Apion (P.Oxy. LXXIX 5202, first century AD).

The few individuals – the majority male – who were primed to acquire Greek cultural literacy were exposed primarily to poetry and rhetoric (in that order), together with some mathematics, in their further education during their teens (Cribiore 2001, chapters 6–8). It seems that more specialized or scientific knowledge – philosophy, astronomy, advanced mathematics, geometry (not to mention any vocational skills) – was not part of the standard elite education, despite the fact that some of these subjects sometimes appear as desirable components of the ideal *enkyklios paideia* or “complete education” among ancient writers. The rich finds of literary and sub-literary papyri prove the availability of and interest in such fields of knowledge in Egypt, but there is no clear indication that any of them

was studied at school-level. Evidently, these subjects became accessible only after the end of a literary education, or through more advanced study in Alexandria.

In its methods and contents, literary education in Egypt, as elsewhere in the Greco-Roman world, remained remarkably uniform and conservative over the centuries, despite the fact that it was never regulated by the state or institutionalized. It was characterized by a formidable rigidity based on incremental and methodical progression in complexity, laid heavy emphasis on memorization, imitation, and repetition, and was often reinforced by corporal punishment (Cribiore 2001, pp. 65–73). Some types of school exercises can be found on papyri, tablets, and ostraca from the third or second century BC to Late Antiquity: syllabaries (lists of words arranged by ascending number of syllables) used in learning to read; thematic wordlists; paraphrases of the *Iliad*; short excerpts from literature for dictation, copying, memorization, and analysis; declamations on historical themes (catalogue and classification of exercises in Cribiore 1996). Underpinning this continuity was a relatively stable core of texts read in school, which focused on the Classical past and included primarily Homer, Hesiod, Pindar, Euripides, Demosthenes, Isocrates, Menander, and Callimachus (Cribiore 2001, pp. 192–204; Cribiore 1997; McNamee 2007, chapter 7). The recurrence of these canonical authors should not give the impression of a standard school “curriculum,” for individual teachers were free to select and vary their texts as they saw fit within the parameters dictated by tradition. A strong moral current typically ran through selections used in school, with maxims, fables, and famous sayings playing an important role in both early grammatical and rhetorical education. Many of these texts highlighted the values of education itself (see previous section for some examples), alongside subjects such as wealth, virtue, women (often with a highly misogynistic streak), friendship, filial piety, and fate (Morgan 1998, chapter 4).

Despite this general stability of educational practices and content, there were some notable diachronic developments in the course of the Greco-Roman millennium. In the Early Ptolemaic Period, music still played some part in education, as it did in Classical and Hellenistic Greece. Zenon, the eponym of the famous archive, supported a number of young men in their education, including a citharode who had ambitions to take part in royal contests (P.Lond. VII 2017, 242/1 BC; Legras 1999, pp. 23–27). Such a trend does not seem to continue in the Roman Period, when musicians were principally entertainers and rarely members of the Hellenic elite (Perpillou-Thomas 1995; the exceptions are from Alexandria, e.g. Stephanis 1988, nos. 24 (citharode), 102 (harpist), 411 (*choraules*), 2398 (citharode)). A somewhat wider variety of authors and genres were read in the Early Ptolemaic Period than appears to be the case later – as is suggested, for instance, by a number of early school texts containing non-epic Archaic poetry (e.g. Cribiore 1996, nos. 234–235, 237, 247). The Roman Period saw the introduction of the systematic study of grammar in school (declensions, conjugations, classification of the parts of speech) and of running glosses on the language of Homer (the so-called “*scholia minora*”). Both phenomena perhaps reflect the widening distance between everyday Greek and the language of the Classical authors, as well as recent developments in scholarship, for normative grammar took shape as a distinct object of investigation only in the later Hellenistic Period. In Late Antiquity, the scriptures came to sit alongside traditional authors in the classroom, while Menander (with the exception of collections of maxims attributed to him) fell out of circulation in favor of Aristophanes. There was also a rise in popularity of catechisms (series of

questions and answers) as a pedagogical device, and a growing interest in learning Latin among those with an eye on a career in public administration or law (Cribiore 2007). Rhetorical declamation, while already taught and practiced in the Ptolemaic Period, became even more prestigious and pervasive in Roman times and Late Antiquity, to the point that it infiltrated and dominated poetic composition. Various poems by students from this period are based on standard rhetorical exercises like the *ethopoiia* (impersonation of a mythological or historical figure in a particular situation, e.g. “what Hesiod would have said when inspired by the Muses” (P.Oxy. L 3537) or “what Cain would have said after killing Abel”; Fournet 1992) and the *enkomion* (speech of praise, e.g. of modesty (P.Lond. Lit. 193)). This symbiosis between poetry and rhetoric finds a fitting illustration in a fourth-century dipinto on the wall of a schoolroom, in which a teacher exhorts his students in elegiac verse to “reach the full summit of rhetorical skill” (Cribiore et al. 2008).

The converse of “cultural” literacy on the Egyptian side was that attained by priests, who thereby had access to the knowledge and traditions of their ancestral culture in the form of ritual, scientific, and narrative texts (Hoffmann 2000; Quack 2009c). Their early education is less adequately documented than the Greek equivalent (Tait 1997; Hoffmann 2000, pp. 37–47, 104), but it is clear that they were taught the Egyptian scripts in temple schools and were first drilled through grammatical exercises and onomastica (thematic lists of words); at a more advanced stage, they joined the temple’s “House of Life” to learn more technical subjects and engage in the copying of literary works. In the Roman Period, some priests could navigate comfortably between Greek and Egyptian literary cultures (van Minnen 1998b; Hickey 2009a, pp. 503–507).

24.3 Fitness as Cultural Capital

Whereas proficiency in literature was a means to promote one’s status in the Greek as well as the Egyptian cultural sphere, proficiency in athletics was characteristic of the Greek cultural sphere only. Bardesan of Edessa compiled in the second century AD a list of peoples and their somewhat bizarre unique habits: the Greeks were those who liked to work out naked (*The Book of the Laws of Countries*, 599). From the Greek perspective of Diodorus (1.81.7), Egyptian education gave no attention to athletic skills at all. In the Early Ptolemaic Period, however, athletic exercises, like Greek intellectual education, were promoted by the Ptolemaic government (cf. P.Hal. 1.261, with tax privileges for athletic trainers). The development of the institutional framework in which these exercises took place resulted, on the other hand, from ambitions of the elite.

Already in the third century BC, rich immigrants, often military men, founded gymnasia or *palaistrai* in their new Egyptian homes in which to meet their peers, train between battles, and give their sons the same kind of education they had enjoyed. The Zenon archive shows that gymnasia already had an important role in the formation of boys from Greek families in the mid-third century BC. The wealthy manager paid for the education of several young boys, presumably orphans of Greek soldiers. One of these boys was the young Pyrrhos; although Zenon only wanted to pay for his (expensive) athletic training if he had the talent to win crowns, the boy did in the end obtain both a literary and a physical education, for his trainer Ptolemaios was confident about his abilities (P.Lond. VII

1941; also P.Cair.Zen. I 59060). Another boy frequented a small *palaistra* in the village of Philadelphieia in the Fayum. A letter on his behalf (PSI IV 418) attests to an elite atmosphere: his caretaker describes the boy's relative poverty as shameful, and is afraid that he will be mocked for it at the wrestling school.

The first gymnasia were private associations with a very basic infrastructure, but this was similar to the situation in the Classical *poleis* in which the immigrants grew up. In the third and second centuries BC, the gymnasium developed across the Eastern Mediterranean from a basic sports infrastructure with an informal club to an institution governed by city officials and located in the monumental city center (Scholz 2004, pp. 13–16). At the same time, citizen education became formally organized after the model of the renewed Athenian ephebate, the original military orientation of which had been replaced by a focus on athletics (Chankowski 2010). In Ptolemaic Egypt, however, gymnasia conformed only to a certain extent to the Hellenistic model: they appeared in villages too, and were governed by quasi-independent associations (Paganini 2011). Until the mid-second century, only the *polis* of Alexandria had an ephebate, while in the *chora*, the military youth formed associations of *neaniskoi* (Legras 1999, pp. 133–142, 196–208), who occasionally competed in small-scale local competitions (P.Genova III 107; BGU VI 1256; SB XX 14728). Once the ephebate spread to the *chora*, however, the *neaniskoi* and their competitions disappeared, as the Greek and Hellenized elite of Egypt had become more oriented toward a career in civil administration than to one in the military.

The importance of the gymnasium and the ephebate as status markers was further formalized under Roman rule: the ephebate became a strictly monitored criterion for membership of the leading “gymnasial class” (Ruffini 2006, pp. 71–78; see Chapter 18); boys applied for admission around the age of 13 (Legras 1999, pp. 151–179). In Alexandria, the ephebate similarly served to identify Alexandrians with citizenship (Legras 1999, pp. 221–223). While many papyri attest to this administrative procedure, the program of the ephebate is largely unknown. There is, for example, currently no way of telling what the ordinary day of an ephebe looked like. Even the length and intensity of the program are unclear: they could have met every day – which would definitely have left a mark on the development of their bodies and personalities – but equally they could have met only once in a while, or had short blocks of intensive training interrupted by longish breaks. Egyptian gymnasia presumably followed the long-term evolution from primarily training grounds to luxurious bathing complexes attested elsewhere; there is little archeological evidence, but imperial-period gymnasiarchs do seem primarily occupied with heating the baths. This does not mean that athletics disappeared, however.

That athletics was a normal feature in the Greek education of boys in Egypt throughout the Hellenistic and Roman Periods is not in doubt. Besides occasional references to training in private letters (see earlier), administrative documents (P.Flor. III 382; P.Oxy. I 42), epitaphs (I.Métriques 22, 82), and even semi-literary genres such as wrestling manuals (P.Oxy. III 466), the participation of Egyptian boys and adult men in local and international competitions bears witness to this (SEG XXVII 1114; PSI III 199; Eusebius, *Chronica* sub Ol. 145 and 178). Athletes from Egypt traveled across the Eastern Mediterranean to compete at the highest level, and a considerable number succeeded in winning important international contests, which shows that the local training and scouting were at least as good as those elsewhere. Egyptian top talents had to focus on the

international scene, as great public *agones* were limited to Alexandria in the Ptolemaic and Early Imperial Periods. Only from the third century AD on did Egypt acquire its own professional agonistic circuit, as after the grant of *polis* status several *metropoleis* introduced their own games. By the 270s, there were *agones* in Alexandria, Antinoopolis, Hermopolis, Oxyrhynchos, Panopolis, and Lykopolis (Remijsen 2014a). To be successful on this agonistic circuit, competitors needed to focus completely on their athletic careers: they were “professional” athletes. The champions of the competitive circuit represented only a minority of all people who had reached some level of athletic competence in Egypt; they took great pride in their career, and they used special titles awarded for particular (combinations of) victories (e.g. *periodonikes*, *Olympionikes*, *Pythionikes*, *hieronikes*, *pleistonikes*, *paradoxos*) as an additional identifier in all kinds of documents.

An important question is how and why athletics could contribute to the socialization of the future leading class. People did not exercise at the gymnasium because this had any practical purpose, nor just because it was healthy. The typical disciplines (running over set distances, running in armor and/or with torches, the pentathlon, wrestling, boxing, and pankration) were fairly technical and had little connection to daily or professional activities. As contemporary critics of athletics pointed out, other sports were healthier or represented a better preparation for a military life (e.g. Lucian, *Anacharsis*; Galen, *Protrepticus* and *Exercise with the small ball*). Unlike literacy, athletics was never “functional,” it was always “cultural”: an athletic body and an active presence in the gymnasium were identity markers for the elite. The evaluation of literary and athletic skills in literary texts could give the impression that the latter were inferior, and less important for the elite’s self-understanding, but such texts are by nature biased toward the intellectual (cf. van Nijf 2004). In a society where illiteracy was not necessarily associated with shame, athletic skills offered an alternative for a positive self-definition. We know of men with a high level of athletic competence who did not possess even functional literacy (cf. van Minnen 1989).

The connection between athletics and elite culture can be explained by its positive associations with leisure and with Greekness. Not all members of the gymnasium would have belonged to Egypt’s high society, but regular visits did require free time and were therefore a hobby of the relatively well-off. One came to see and to be seen – during a religious ritual at one of the shrines, during a banquet, and during the daily athletic exercises that the gymnasium was designed for. The second reason why men asserted their status by wrestling or throwing a discus was to represent themselves as Greek. Athletics had a distinctly Greek visual style and ritual: before starting to exercise, people fully undressed, oiled their naked bodies, and sprinkled them with dust. Each sport had its own techniques and set of rules. Even for fairly universal disciplines such as running and boxing, the Greekness was therefore obvious to all viewers. As a result of frequent training, one acquired a fit and masculine, Greek body. For non-Greeks, adopting the gymnasium lifestyle could perhaps be a visual step in the process of Hellenization, while for boys of undisputed Greek descent, athletics was important in their socialization process.

Becoming a competent member of a shared society requires an internalization of the values, attitudes, and norms of that society (Rapley and Hanson 2006). Training was aimed not only at a specific “fit” look, but also at the values such a look represented. Particular physical competences did not prepare boys for society, but the concomitant

mindset did. An athletic body is the result of hard work and self-discipline. The first of four funerary epigrams for a trainer of the Hermopolitan ephebes commemorates how he taught them not only the many elements of wrestling technique, but also the many toils of athletics (I.Métriques 22 I.5–6). In the Hellenistic ephebate in Asia Minor and Greece, there was even a special prize for the ephebe who toiled hardest (*philoponia*), as well as special prizes for the best behavior (*eutaxia*) and the best physical shape (*euexia*) (Crowther 1991; cf. Hin 2007). Values such as *philoponia* were transferable from the training field to adult life. In literary education, too, application and hard work were much-lauded virtues (Cribiore 2001, pp. 250–252).

The agonistic drive is often regarded as the quintessential Greek virtue. In modern educational systems, team sports are emphasized, because the skill to work together toward a victory is highly valued in modern democracies. In the more hierarchic ancient world, individual disciplines were taught, and personal excellence was openly presented as a goal. The focus on the agonistic principle of being better than all others was not very strong in Egypt, however, at least not before the third century AD. Elsewhere, competition was a central aspect of the ephebic program. Ephebic contests certainly existed in Alexandria, and from 130 on also in that other *polis*, Antinoopolis, but they are unattested in the *metropoleis* until the early third century, when we suddenly have evidence for ephebic games in Oxyrhynchos (P.Oxy. IV 705; SB X 10493), Leontopolis (SEG XL 1568), and Hermopolis (I.Métriques 22 IV). This evolution runs parallel to the late development of *agones* for professional athletes in Egypt. Before the third century, ephebes were apparently not made to compete publicly before the whole city, and young men in Egypt were therefore less acquainted than their peers in urban centers elsewhere with the pressure to excel. This is not an odd lacuna in their education. Boys were not taught to be competitive, because they did not need to be. If they looked like fit Greeks and did not shy away from hard work, they were ready for society. Without a city council to publicly honor citizens for their excellence – whether excellence in athletics, in generosity, or in patriotism – the competitive spirit between leading citizens that characterized public life in the Greco-Roman *polis* (Zuiderhoek 2009) would have been less strong in the Egyptian *metropoleis* (cf. Robert 1940, pp. 242–243). After 200, the elite did become more publicly competitive (Tacoma 2006, pp. 3–10).

In the course of the fourth century, alternative perceptions of the body became dominant in society. The changed socioeconomic circumstances of the Late Antique city created problems for the ephebate and the civic *agones*. With them, the institutional apparatus that had embedded the ideal of a fit and muscular body in the elite socialization process disappeared. Among those in society who wished to dedicate their lives to spirituality, the rise of asceticism offered an alternative physical ideal. Even though the term “asceticism” is etymologically connected to the word for athletic training (*askesis*), the purpose was exactly its opposite: rather than cultivating an artificially muscular body – a vain quest for beauty – the ascetic trained himself to ignore his physical state. Apa Bane, an ascetic of the second half of the fourth century from Minya in Middle Egypt, lived for 18 years standing up in a dark cell, fasting strictly. The medical examination of his remains showed that the continuous standing did develop his muscles – just like athletic training – but also painfully deformed his spine. If he had fallen, he would never have been able to get back up (Markschies 2004, pp. 202–204).

24.4 The Body in Everyday Life

The perfected nude body of the athlete, particularly that of the well-rounded pentathlete represented by famous Classical sculptures, was an unobtainable ideal for all but a happy few. The majority of the population strove merely for health. This may have been in easier reach for the elite of Greco-Roman Egypt than for the rest of the population: they had airier living quarters and a better access to various foodstuffs and medical specialists. Moreover, particular attention was paid to a healthy lifestyle in Greek elite society: not only did the educational system promote exercise, but Greek medicine (unlike its Egyptian counterpart) included dietetic instructions for both the sick and the well (Lang 2013, p. 153). A healthy body should not be assumed even for this fortunate group, however. An ephebic inscription of AD 220 from Leontopolis (SEG XL 1568) lists 66 young men who finished their ephebates that year. After 8 victors and 39 non-victors, 19 ephebes are mentioned under a separate heading: those who were accepted into the cohort of graduated ephebes without having passed the physical program because of disabilities. That more than a quarter of the young men from the gymnasial class were physically unable to follow this program should not surprise us: the ancient world was not a healthy place.

First, Egypt was not a safe environment. Danger could be hidden behind every rock: scorpion stings and snake bites are a popular literary *topos* and seem to have been relatively common. For the first Greek immigrants, used to nonvenomous European species, the more toxic – although rarely lethal – Egyptian varieties of scorpions and the potentially fatal snakes, such as the horned viper and hooded cobra, would have represented a new danger (Lang 2013, pp. 5–6). At the quarry of Mons Claudianus, records were kept of all workmen incapable of work: on the eighth of Epeiph (O.Claud. II 212), one man was indeed out because of a scorpion sting. Four of his colleagues were also wounded. Practical accidents were a common danger in ancient society, which did not share our modern obsession with safety measures. P.Oxy. L 3555 gives us the ancient equivalent of a car accident: a girl was run over by a slave riding a donkey; her hand was damaged for life. Wounds were common, although usually not life-threatening – scars are indeed commonly mentioned as identifiers in official documents. Broken bones could be dealt with effectively: well-healed ones, set with the help of a splint, are known even from the third-millennium BC pyramid workers of Giza. Open wounds were treatable too, for example by stitching, although the risk of infection would have been greater due to unhygienic circumstances. There is also evidence for the successful amputation of limbs (Lang 2013, p. 194).

Two other workmen of Mons Claudianus indisposed on the eighth of Epeiph suffered from fever and an eye problem respectively. This gives us a representative picture: fever and headaches are the most frequently mentioned problems in the papyrological evidence, immediately followed by eye diseases (e.g. P.Oxy. XLII 3078; PSI IV 299). Blindness or poor eyesight was consequently one of the most common disabilities. In the inscription from Leontopolis, this is even the only explicitly mentioned disability. Some disabilities were congenital. It is possible that the practice of brother–sister marriage in Roman Egypt (see Chapter 21) led to a greater instance of congenital problems than elsewhere, but as few Roman-era mummies have been medically examined, there is not yet any evidence for this hypothesis (Scheidel 2012, pp. 309–312). In general, children with a congenital

handicap would have higher mortality rates, but some certainly survived. People with growth disorders were popular in specific sectors, such as entertainment and the court. The motif of the dwarf dancers is particularly widespread (Dasen 2013, p. 155).

Greco-Roman Egypt – or, in fact, most of the more populated areas in the premodern world, especially around water and marches – was moreover not a healthy environment. Study of the bone lesions and DNA of mummies has proven that malaria was endemic, and tuberculosis may have been as well. The latter sometimes coincided with leprosy infections, which Roman authors considered to be native to Egypt (e.g. Pliny, *Naturalis Historia* 26.5). Also found in mummies are intestinal parasites, which are rarely lethal, but which would have weakened many. Gastrointestinal diseases such as diarrhea, dysentery, and typhoid are most difficult to recognize in physical remains, but comparison with other preindustrial societies suggests that these must have represented a common cause of death, particularly for infants (Scheidel 2012, pp. 309–313; Lang 2013, pp. 10–20).

Diseases were a more serious problem than wounds, as ancient medicine did not suffice to treat many of them. Although anatomical knowledge increased greatly in Hellenistic Alexandria, the impact on medical practice seems to have been minute (see Chapter 32). Many of the medical prescriptions known from papyri were more likely to harm than to help. Much commented on in modern literature is the use of feces in drugs (Lang 2013, pp. 164–177). Even Herophilus, the first anatomist performing dissections in third-century BC Alexandria, used crocodile dung (Herophilus, T260 ed. von Staden). An exception to the inefficacy of Egyptian medicines is the use of milk extracted from seed pods of the *Papaver somniferum* (i.e. opium), which did have effect as a painkiller (for its use in Ptolemaic Egypt, see e.g. P.Ryl. II 141.21–22; SB VIII 9860 A22 and C9). In general, the endemic diseases of the premodern world led to a high mortality rate.

Because good health was such a fickle state in Antiquity, it was constantly on people's minds. Among the most common elements of private letters are information on the writer's health and inquiries about the health of the addressee and other acquaintances (e.g. BGU II 380; P.Col. VIII 215; PSI III 177). "I pray for your health" is also a normal closing formula in imperial-period letters. This formula may have gained popularity under Egyptian influence, as it is a far older *topos* in Demotic letters (Depauw 2006, p. 189). Because medical knowledge was inadequate, health was understood to be out of human control. Requests for health in prayer can be interpreted within the institutionalized religion. The same is true for the healers practicing in Egyptian temples: a variety of medical practices, such as oracles, incubation, and the consultation of medical books for drugs and spells, all took place in sanctuaries (Lang 2013, pp. 45–54, 134–138).

A more private way to deal with the continuous anxiety about diseases, fertility, and fitness was to seek control of the situation by manipulating supernatural powers into helping through magical rituals. These underwent a process of great innovation in the Roman Period (Dieleman 2012, pp. 338–342). Magical papyri from this era attest an eclectic and multilingual set of rituals and spells, combining ancient Egyptian rites practiced at the temples with Greek and Jewish methods. It was of the utmost importance to perform a rite and say and write the words exactly correctly – manipulating demonic forces was a dangerous business. Therefore, trained professionals were hired for a fee. They had access to handbooks with instructions developed through the centuries, and they knew the secret names of the demons and deities and how to write them down (see Chapter 28).

Although for the Roman era healing is not the best attested aim of magic (as it was in the Pharaonic Period), many magical texts still contain recipes for healing and for providing protection against disease-bringing demons, to be written down on a small metal tablet (e.g. silver or lead), a papyrus, or a gem, and to be worn on the body as an amulet. Such recipes explain which complicated magical signs and words to use, how to address the gods or demons in question, what images to draw (e.g. a snake biting its own tail), and what formulaic incantations to use in healing or preventing illness – sometimes every kind of sickness, sometimes specific kinds such as fever – or occasionally in protecting against other physical dangers, such as venomous animals (Dieleman 2012, pp. 347–349, 352–354).

The anxiety about the body that pervaded the whole of society was particularly strong with athletes and other professional competitors. Although in general far more healthy than the rest of the population – their career choice required a good genetic disposition, frequent physical training, and a protein-rich diet – the athletes' entire livelihood depended on their being able to maintain peak condition. One injury could bring everything to a sudden end. This stimulated superstition, and therefore athletes and performers enjoyed a special reputation in Antiquity: it was assumed that they possessed intimate knowledge of black magic and evil potions (cf. Ammianus Marcellinus 26.3.3, 4.25, 28.1.8; Libanius, *Orationes* 1.156–159; Cassiodorus, *Variae* 3.51.2). From Egypt, we know three victory charms (P.Oxy. XII 1478; Pap.Graec.Mag. I 4.2159–2160, II 7.390–393); undoubtedly, certain amulets served the same purpose. Most typical agonistic spells, however, are binding curses for opponents. The two known examples of this format are both directed against fellow runners (Tremel 2004, no. 10; SEG LVII 1985), while a magical handbook explains an elaborate rite for binding opponents in a chariot race, which involves drowning a cat and sprinkling the water used on the racing track (Pap.Graec.Mag. III 1–164). Spectacle buildings such as stadia, circuses, theaters, and baths received a special place in the ritual, because they were considered particularly attractive for demons, as people engaged in or entranced by the spectacle were vulnerable victims (Webb 2008, pp. 173–175).

FURTHER READING

For comprehensive databases of published literary and semi-literary papyri, see Cedopal online and LDAB. Werner (1999) provides a useful general bibliography and *précis* of recent studies on literacy in the Greco-Roman world (including Egypt). The several articles on (il)literacy in Greco-Roman Egypt collected in Youtie (1973, 1981) remain fundamental. Cribiore (2001) is an accessible and lively introduction to literary education. For the education of girls, see Chapter 22. The only work that treats intellectual education in Greco-Roman Egypt together with physical education is Legras (1999). A selection of papyri related to athletics and competition can be found in Pap.Agon. and P.Oxy. LXXIX. Remijsen (2014a) gives an overview of the history of Greek athletics in Greco-Roman Egypt, with a larger focus on the professional circuit. Scheidel (2001) provides an excellent analysis of disease and its impact on the population of Egypt. For a discussion of medical practice in Egypt, see Lang (2013) for the Hellenistic Period and Hirt Raj (2006) for the Roman; see also Chapter 32.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

Life Portraits: People of a Multicultural Generation

Yanne Broux

Hellenization, Romanization, ethnicity, “glocalization”: these are buzzwords that are frequently used when discussing the concept of identity in the Greco-Roman world. Looking at societies in a wider perspective has its merits, of course, but in this chapter we will focus on the micro-level, zooming in on concrete situations in order to get an idea of how (or if) pluralism is reflected in reality; or, to put it simply, how things were done in the daily life of the people of the multicultural generations in Greco-Roman Egypt. The chapter is divided into four time slots: the archive of Teos and Thabis for the Early Ptolemaic Period; the archive of Dryton, Apollonia, and their descendants for the late second century BC; the archive of Philosarapis for the Imperial Period; and the archive of Dioskoros for Late Antiquity.

25.1 The Closed Community of Egyptian Undertakers

The Theban Teos and his wife Statirtbint alias Thabis were subjects of Alexander’s vast – albeit short-lived – empire, and afterwards experienced the first decades of Ptolemaic rule. Their archive consists of 13 documents (12 papyri and one inscribed piece of linen wrapped around the texts, TM Arch 228) dated between 327 and 306 BC, and can be divided into two groups: texts dealing with the purchase of a house by Statirtbint and texts concerning Teos’ undertaking business (Depauw 2000, docs. 1–12). Statirtbint’s documents include three extensive sales contracts for a house she bought in 311 BC and two minor texts regarding transfer taxes paid on that sale (docs. 1–5). Teos’ share consists of tax receipts and business documents concerning his position as a choachyte (funerary priest)

A Companion to Greco-Roman and Late Antique Egypt, First Edition.

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(docs. 6–12). Such “undertakers” were responsible for the entombment of mummies after embalmmment and for their food-offerings and libations, in return for a fee usually paid by relatives of the dead. The taxes for bringing a mummy into the necropolis, as well as the transfer tax for tombs, were paid by Teos himself.

All documents in this archive are written in Demotic. This comes as no surprise, given the early date and the funerary milieu in which this family moved, which was a quintessentially Egyptian sphere. This also explains the absence of Greeks in the documentation. Even the state official (*šḥn*) in the receipt for the transfer tax for the house (doc. 5) still bears an Egyptian name at this time (Nechtharmais son of Amenophis). The first known Greek in this function is not attested until 284 BC: *Gsnntws p3 šḥn* (“Xenanthos(?), the official”) in P.BM inv. 10537 (Glanville 1939).

Thanks to Statirtbint’s contracts, and many others dated within the next 100 years, the neighborhood in which the property was located can be reconstructed quite accurately, offering a unique insight into the couple’s immediate environment. The house was situated in the northern quarter of Thebes, in the district named “the House of the Cow” (*t3 ḥm.t n t3 ḥ.t*), which probably refers to the goddess Hathor (the Greek name of this district is Chrysopolis, “Golden City,” which may refer to Hathor’s epithet “the golden one”) (Figure 25.1). The house (indicated as L on the plan) was raised in traditional mud-brick, and the descriptions in the contracts allow us to follow the renovations made in the course of its history. In the first contract (doc. 1), it appears to have been in good state, measuring 82.5 square meters. It was closed in by houses on all sides, but a small alley to the north gave access to the street in the west. The new owners also added an alley to the west, separating the house from J1. However, by the time they sold it in 313 BC, it had fallen into disrepair (doc. 2). When Statirtbint purchased the property in 311 BC, renovations were underway, and part of the living quarters in the western section was converted into a courtyard (doc. 3). Those residents whose titles are given in the contracts were all active in the religious sphere: the first owner, Petamenophis, was a *pastophoros*-priest of Amun (i.e. a low-ranking priest, see Table 26.1); he sold the house to Thotrois, a goldsmith working in the same temple. In the second contract, the house was sold to another

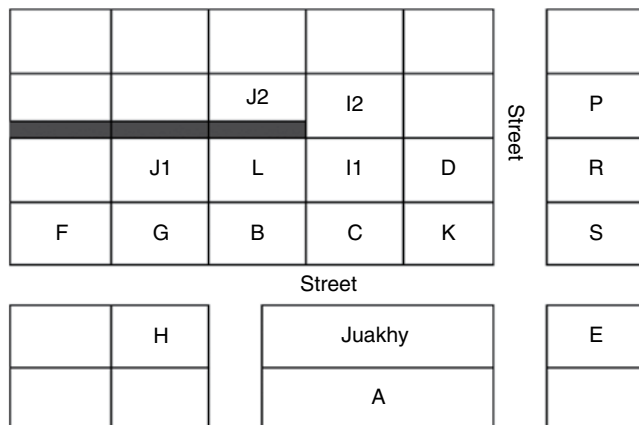


Figure 25.1 Plan of “the House of the Cow” district in Thebes. Source: After Depauw (2000), p. 27.

goldsmith, Phibis, who eventually sold it on to Statirtbint. At this time, house J2 to the north was owned by Horos, *pastophoros*-priest of Khonsu, house G to the south-west belonged to Pausis, soldier of the temple of Amun, and house B to the south to Pammonesis, lector-priest of the West of Thebes. In 288 BC, all of a sudden, a Greek appears in the district: house C, which in 314 BC was still registered solely under Petemestous son of Pchelchons, is in 288 BC described as “the house of the scribe Petemestous son of Pchelchons, ... which is in the possession of the Greek (Wynn) Aiteros son of Nikophron (*zytr s3 Nkwprn*).” Although Aiteros owned the house, this does not imply that he actually lived in the neighborhood, so it is not possible to draw conclusions on the integration of early settlers into this Egyptian environment. What we can assume, though, since Aiteros found it worthwhile to invest in real estate as a source of income – and, notably, this far south from Alexandria and all the Greek “action” – is that his presence in Egypt was not temporary. The next Greek connected to the area is not attested until some 50 years later: in this case, Dorian, an administrator, actually lived in the house (he is mentioned as the neighbor to the east of the house on sale), while the owner was an Egyptian prophet of Mut. No ethnic or patronymic is given, so it is impossible to tell whether he was an immigrant, a Greek born in Egypt, or even an ambitious Egyptian. In 212 BC, Hermodemos son of Ammonios sold a house in “the House of the Cow.” One of his neighbors (to the east) was a certain Hermokles. Again, no patronymic or ethnic is given, but the name suggests at least Greek status. It should be remarked that all witnesses of this contract bear Egyptian names, even though the seller was a Greek. Finally, in 182 BC, Damon son of Apollonios sold his house to a *pastophoros* of Amun. This time, an ethnic is given: he is defined as “a Greek born in Egypt” (*Wynn ms Kmy*). Damon’s father, or maybe even his grandfather, had probably settled in Egypt as a soldier, and his offspring stuck to the trade. At least some Greeks did eventually settle in the area, but the district remained thoroughly Egyptian in character.

25.2 The Best of Two Worlds

The archive of Dryton, Apollonia, and descendants is exemplary when it comes to the question of ethnic identity in Ptolemaic Egypt, as well as to gender issues (Vandorpe 2002a, 2014b; Vandorpe and Waebens 2010a, section 36; TM Arch 74). The protagonists are Dryton and his wife Apollonia. As this was Dryton’s second marriage, the archive focuses on his later life, but elements of his past seep through and tell us something of his background. Born in 192 BC, he was the son of a Cretan immigrant, Pamphilos; his mother is unknown. He possessed citizenship of the Greek *polis* Ptolemais, but as a cavalryman he traveled throughout the country. While stationed in Diospolis Mikra, he married Sarapias in 164 BC, on which occasion he drew up a will (P.Dryton 1). There are no clues as to why this first marriage fell apart, but in any case, 14 years later, we encounter a new will (P.Dryton 2), this time in favor of his son by Sarapias, named Esthladas, and his newlywed wife Apollonia. They probably met through Apollonia’s father Ptolemaios alias Pamenos, who served in the same regiment as Dryton in Pathyris, a town some 30 km south of Thebes.

The archive consists of both Greek and Demotic texts, including wills, divorce agreements, loans and receipts, petitions, letters, lists, and accounts (Vandorpe 2002a). Dryton

and Esthladas' private letters and accounts are written in Greek (P.Dryton 36–44): as second- and even third-generation immigrants, they stuck to their ancestors' native language (Vandorpe and Waebens 2010a). Likewise, their business documents (loans, petitions, receipts, etc.; P. Dryton 11, 21, 22, 31, and 32) are generally also in Greek, following Greek legal custom (the exceptional Demotic texts relating to Dryton can be explained by the Egyptian background of the other party). Among Apollonia's documents, however, we find contracts and acknowledgments according to both Egyptian and Greek custom. Although the choice of a certain format might seem arbitrary at first, that is certainly not the case. Since the Greek notary's office in Pathyris was not established until 136 BC, there was no alternative but for Apollonia to register her earliest transactions (P.Dryton 13, 14, 15, and 20) at the local temple notary. In 131, 129, and 127 BC, however, she appeals to the Greek notary or *agoranomos* (P.Dryton 16, 17, and 19).

This switching between Greek and Demotic brings us to the question of Apollonia's ethnicity. For a long time, it was assumed that she too descended from a Greek immigrant, just like her husband, but that her family had "Egyptianized" along the way. In a loan of wheat (P.Dryton 16), she is styled as "Apollonia, daughter of Ptolemaios son of Hermokrates, Cyrenaeen," and elsewhere her father too bears the Greek ethnic "Cyrenaeen" (P.Dryton 33). It has now become clear, however, that her grandfather, Hermokrates alias Panas, was initially a *rmt Swn*, a "man of Syene" (Dem. Conf. 7 p. 244, no. 8 descr.): a description used for Egyptian soldiers stationed at the southern border (Vandorpe 2011, p. 304). After a couple of years, he was promoted to the newly installed ranks of the *misthophoroi* or "men receiving pay" (*rmt iw=f šp hbs*). So, in origin, this was actually an Egyptian family. The ethnic was therefore false, and was merely a symbol of either Hermokrates' or Ptolemaios' advancement to Greek status through their military career. The family had not Egyptianized; on the contrary, it had Hellenized. Apollonia's marriage to Dryton, the son of an actual Greek immigrant, probably enhanced her status even further.

This dual ethnic identity is explicit in the numerous double names attested among the family members (see Figure 25.2). The two names are often related to each other, referring to corresponding gods: Apollonios-Nechthyris to Apollo and Horus, Apollonia-Senmonthis to Apollo and Montu (in Thebes), Ammonia-Senminis to Ammon and Min, Herakleia-Senapathis to Herakles and Apathes (the "Great of strength"), and Herais-Tiesris

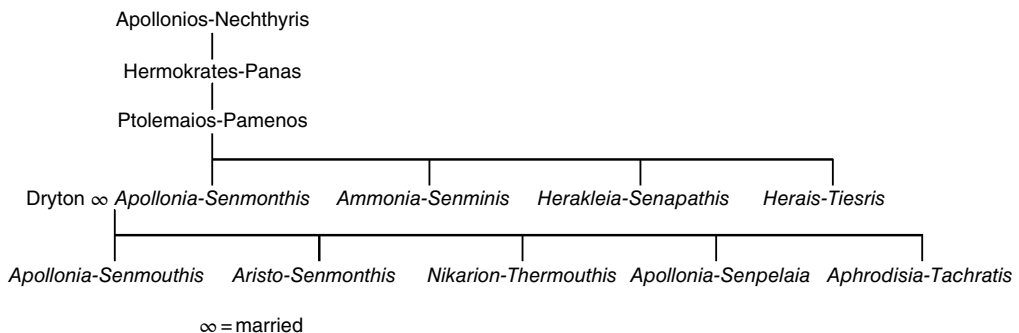


Figure 25.2 Family of Dryton and Apollonia from Pathyris. Source: courtesy Yanne Broux.

to Hera and Mut (by means of her epithet; Coussement 2016; P.Erbstreit: App. I). The use of these double names was not standard in identification, though; the choice mainly depended on the context. In fact, Apollonia seldom used both her names. Instead, to the outside world, she presented herself as a Greek woman, using only her Greek name and identifying herself as Greek or Cyrenaeon in business documents and in dealings with officials. In private accounts and letters, however, she is consistently referred to as Senmonthis (Vandorpe 2002b, pp. 332, 334).

This brings us to Apollonia's role as a businesswoman (Vandorpe 2002b), a position which has made her (in)famous in most gender studies of the Hellenistic Period today. She earned her bad reputation among some scholars by acting for herself in several loan contracts, thus allegedly shaming not only herself but also her Greek husband. Indeed, the "classic" Greek woman was in every respect dependent on her guardian – usually her husband or her father – and had to be assisted by him to perform transactions. This is in stark contrast to Egyptian women, who were legally independent and usually acted on their own. Apollonia correctly followed the rules of each tradition, and took advantage of both. The documents in which she appears without a guardian were all drafted by the Egyptian temple notary; therefore, she followed Egyptian custom there. In the contracts drawn up by the Greek notary after 136 BC, however, she is always assisted by Dryton, according to Greek custom. It is not unheard of for women to act without a guardian in Greek contracts (Vandorpe 2002b, p. 331, n. 13), so it is revealing that Apollonia chose to do so anyway. By presenting herself in the Greek fashion, she could command respect by emphasizing her elevated Greek status. It is questionable to what extent she really needed Dryton's permission to conduct her business, as it is clear from the Demotic documents that she was perfectly capable of managing her own affairs. Her position should not of course be generalized too quickly, but it appears that for the lucky few, it was possible to gain a comparatively substantial level of (economic) independence.

All of these issues raise questions about the profoundness of Hellenization of this family. Greek status seems to have been more of a superficial tool for social and economic advancement than an actual goal. This is also demonstrated in the subsequent generations: all of Apollonia and Dryton's daughters married Egyptians, according to Egyptian customs (as can be seen in their marriage contracts and divorce agreements; P.Dryton 5–9), and although they also carried double names, their own children bore single Egyptian ones. Despite all their efforts, the Greek elements in this family seem to have been not much more than a glossy surface coating their Egyptian roots.

25.3 Local Elite Identity in an Expanding Empire

For the Roman Period, we turn to a family living in Tebtynis in the Arsinoite nome (Van Groningen 1950; Broux 2015b, p. 203; TM Arch 192). It is one of the most extensive families known for this time, with documents spreading over four generations, ranging between AD 89 and 224. Its core revolves around Herakleides alias Valerius and his offspring: the family line in which the documents were handed down (see the family tree in Figure 21.2).

This is one of the only families of the Roman Period whose social mobility is directly documented. Initially, it was part of the "settlers of the 6475 Greek men in the Arsinoite

nome” (e.g. P.Fam.Tebt. 29), a group attested only in the Roman Period but which is believed to have descended from Ptolemaic soldiers who settled in the same region (Canducci 1990). It was the equivalent of “those of the gymnasium” in the other Egyptian nomes. Juridically speaking, the family was part of the class of the Egyptians, but it enjoyed a higher social standing than ordinary Egyptians (for these metropolitan orders, see Broux 2013; see also Chapter 18). Its status is reflected in its naming patterns: all family members have Greek (double) names, and the level of homonymy, not only with direct ancestors (parents or grandparents) but also with uncles, is high – a common feature in elite families. It even incorporated a Latin name, Valerius, into its family onomastics as a popular add-on. This does not point to Roman citizenship, though, as some believe; Latin names could be adopted by non-Romans, and in this case the name was probably chosen as a tribute to Valerius Paulinus, who was Egypt’s prefect at the time Herakleides alias Valerius was born.

The children of Herakleides-Valerius and Herakleia would initially have inherited their parents’ status. In AD 133, however, Herakleides-Valerius, his wife, and his children all obtained citizenship of the newly founded city of Antinoopolis, so their status in the Arsinoite nome became irrelevant (P.Fam.Tebt. 30). They were not just citizens but “New Greeks of Antinoopolis.” This *polis* was founded in AD 130 by Hadrian, right across from Hermopolis on the other bank of the Nile. Settlers were selected among the citizens of the three other Greek *poleis*, the elite of the nomes, and veterans – all high-ranking members of society. Some of the privileges granted to Antinoite citizens are known through our archive. When they met the required property qualification, Antinoites were eligible for city magistracies and other offices; thus, in AD 176, Lysimachos alias Didymos, grandson of Lysimachos, was elected as “commandor of the night-watch,” although for unknown reasons he was unable to perform his duties (P.Fam.Tebt. 41). For liturgies outside Antinoopolis, its citizens were granted exemption.

The family transferred its main residency to the new city. Although it was located some 120 miles south of Tebtynis, the family retained strong ties with its place of origin, where it still possessed houses and land (which provided the family’s income), and where some relatives still remained. The change is noticeable in the archival composition. It consists of 51 documents, all written in Greek (Demotic as documentary language had long since died out; Lewis 1993), 21 of which can be attributed to four subgroups concerning a specific topic, such as those dealing with claims on a slave (P.Fam.Tebt. 37, 38, 40), the guardianship of Philosarapis, grandson of Herakleides alias Valerius (P.Fam.Tebt. 49–51, 53a–c), and registration for Antinoopolite citizenship (P.Fam.Tebt. 30, 32–34). The remaining papyri are business or taxation documents and records of legal proceedings (see Smolders in Vandorpe et al. 2015, pp. 307–314). Most are concentrated in the first two generations; from AD 133, their number decreases significantly. No business documents from the third generation survive, although they reappear with the fourth. After its move to Antinoopolis, the family probably filed most of its documents there, storing only those concerned with its local business in Tebtynis, where the current archive was discovered.

As in Dryton and Apollonia’s archive, the business documents of the Tebtynis family are not limited to men; the women in this archive seem to have enjoyed a relatively high level of financial independence as well. In AD 119, Herakleides-Valerius’ mother Didyme was allotted 10 arouras of land, and four years later she sold half of them (P.Fam.Tebt. 23). Ten years after that, Herakleia alias Ninnous, a cousin of Herakleia, inherited six arouras from her own father (P.Fam.Tebt. 25). In AD 132, Herakleia appointed

Herakleides alias Valerius as her representative to sell one of her slaves, although the agreement clearly states that the money had to go to his wife (P.Fam.Tebt. 27).

By the middle of the second century AD, this family was firmly established in Antinoopolis. Documents still reveal a profound interest in the Arsinoite region, as the family continued to own property and do business there, but its status as local metropolitan elite was cast aside in favor of that of Greek citizen. This is visible not only in the change of status designations, but also in that of nomenclature. Herakleides alias Valerius' youngest sons, Sarapammon alias Neilammon and Philantinoos alias Neilammon, were born after the move to Antinoopolis (P.Fam.Tebt. 30). They bear names that have no visible connection with the rest of the family. Perhaps the need to connect with ancestors was less stringent in the newly founded city. Lysimachos alias Didymos even reverted back to the single-name system for most of his children; as they were entitled by birth to the official titles of tribe and deme, they no longer needed a double name to express their status.

25.4 The Last Convulsions of Hellenism

The last archive under scrutiny is that of Dioskoros, a government official and free-lance poet living in early sixth-century Aphrodito (Fournet 2008a, b; see also www.byzantineegypt.org; TM Arch 72). This Middle Egyptian town, situated roughly halfway between Memphis and Thebes, lay in the Coptic heartland, with many monasteries in the vicinity. The archive itself is enormous: at present, it encompasses about 680 documents written either in Greek or in Coptic. It spans most of the sixth century, from AD 506 until 585. Texts belonging to Dioskoros himself start around the middle of the century and can be traced until AD 573, when he probably became a monk like his father. Earlier documents relate to his family (mostly his father), while in the last phase the archive was probably managed by his wife Sophia (Fournet 2008b, p. 17). Most Greek texts were published soon after their discovery (mainly in P.Cairo Masp. I–III; P.Lond. V and P.Flor. III), but as the editors were not familiar with Coptic, these papyri were left aside and their portion remains obscure (MacCoull 1988, p. 20; updates in Fournet 2008a). Unfortunately, this leaves us with a structural hole when studying Dioskoros' multicultural environment.

Dioskoros was of a rich cultural blend, combining Egyptian, Greek, and Christian heritage. He descended from an Egyptian great-grandfather, Psimanobet (literally, “bird-herder”), who apparently saw some opportunity for his son, as he gave him a Greek name, also Dioskoros (senior). Egypt was largely christianized by this time, but Greek names still had a certain ring to them, especially in the higher circles. The choice of the name Dioskoros was no coincidence, however: it was the translation of the Egyptian “Son of God” (*šr-ntr* or Shenoute), a popular name among Christians. Dioskoros' father, Apollos, obtained a comfortable position: not only did he inherit and accumulate several plots of land, including pastures and vineyards, but he also made a rewarding career for himself, starting out as a simple assistant (P.Cairo Masp. I 67124) and rising to a member of the landowners' union responsible for the collection of taxes (e.g. P.Flor. III 283). Some time around AD 538, he entered a monastery, as indicated by the title Apa (PSI III 933), but he could not resist of public duty, and in AD 540 he journeyed to Constantinople to petition the emperor concerning Aphrodito's distinct tax status. During his stay, our

Egyptian villager was awarded a status upgrade, as his change of *cognomen* from Aurelius (carried by almost all inhabitants of the empire) to Flavius (awarded mainly to soldiers and higher state officials) attests, probably as a result of his mission (Keenan 1973).

This status designation was passed on to his son, who became Flavius Dioskoros, and who surpassed his father in his career. He started out as headman of the village around AD 547 (P.Cairo Masp. II 67128), and some 20 years later he set out for Antinoopolis, where he became a lawyer. In his first position, he too headed a delegation to Constantinople, again to defend Aphrodito's privileged tax status (AD 548). By good fortune (only a handful of papyri from Constantinople have survived), the fancy charter issued by Emperor Justinian's chancellery was found among Dioskoros' documents (Salomon 1948). So, both he and his father were able to visit the heart of the empire and plead their case before the emperor himself; probably only a few Egyptians in all Roman history could boast of something this spectacular.

Dioskoros received a thorough Classical Greek education (probably at Alexandria), which is not only apparent from his writings (he was also fluent in Coptic), but also from the literary authors he collected. Among other things, his archive contains fragments of Homer, Athenian comedians such as Menander, and a "Life of Isocrates" (P.Aphrod.Lit. I; P.Cair. inv. JE 43227 and P.Cairo Masp. II 67175); some of these would have been lost to us if it had not been for Dioskoros. Scraps with declensions of Greek verbs and a fragment of a self-compiled Greek–Coptic lexicon further attest to his passion for linguistics (P.Aphrod. Lit. III 1–4 and MPER XVIII 256; see Table 25.1). A charge filed by the Alexandrian philosopher Horapollon, who is known from literary sources, was also found among Dioskoros' papers. There is no direct connection between the two, so Dioskoros probably dug up the letter in the official archives during his stay in Antinoopolis. It seems that even in Antiquity, archive studies were already popular.

What Dioskoros is most known for, however, is his poetry. He composed 51 poems in Greek, most of them drafts of eulogies for prominent persons written on recycled papyrus (Fournet 1999). Unfortunately, because of these, he has long been the laughing stock of historians, who made the mistake of comparing them to classical verse. One should not forget that Dioskoros' compositions are the oldest surviving poems written by a poet's own hand, and for this alone they are remarkable. They show both Greek and Christian influences: Dioskoros took Christian themes, such as Bible quotes, and put them in a pagan setting by using Homeric dialect and allegories. This blending of paganism and Christianity seems paradoxical at first sight, but actually it was not: paganism was tolerated as long as it steered clear of the religious sphere and was applied to the cultural only

Table 25.1 Dioskoros' Greek–Coptic glossary: an extract.

ἵππος	<i>horse</i>	ΣΤΟ	<i>horse</i>
ἵππεύς	<i>cavalryman</i>	ΠΕΤΤΑΛΗΥ	<i>he that is mounted</i>
ἵποβάτης	<i>horseman</i>	ḲΤΟΥ ΟΝ	<i>ditto</i>
ἵππικός	<i>of a horse/horsemen</i>	ḲΤΟΥ ΟΝ	<i>ditto</i>
ἵππαναβάτης	<i>mounted man</i>	ḲΤΟΥ ΟΝ	<i>ditto</i>
φοράς	<i>brood-mare</i>	ΣΤΟΩΡΕ	<i>mare</i>
ἡμίονος	<i>mule</i>	ΜΟΥΛΔ	<i>mule</i>

(Fournet 2003, p. 107). In this respect, Dioskoros' poems fit nicely into the contemporary Theban poetic movement, represented by Nonnus, Pseudo-Apollinarius, and others, by whom he was clearly influenced, but whose talents he could never match (Fournet 2003, p. 103; see also Agosti 2008).

Dioskoros compiled a glossary in order to enlarge his Greek vocabulary. For each Coptic word, he noted down one or more Greek synonyms, which could be useful for his own literary productions. His glossary was organized by subjects, not alphabetically (for which, see Box 25.2): it deals with parts of the body, adjectives indicating blindness, names of animals and connected words, river-words and fishes, utensils, occupations, words connected to Dionysus and his cult, and so on. An example is found in Table 25.1 (Bell and Crum 1925, ll. 76–82).

On this private, bilingual glossary, we end the anecdotes of these remarkable individuals. A brief glimpse into their lives has been offered. The examples given here should not of course be overgeneralized. The undertakers in Thebes, the Greeks in Pathyris and Tebtynis, and the Flavii in Aphrodite all belonged to a certain segment of the population, with its own traditions and privileges.

Box 25.2 From *Halaham* to alphabetical order.

by Katelijn Vandorpe

Egyptian texts had a long tradition of ordering words by their determinatives (e.g. the category of “birds” or “men”). But alongside this tradition, a new practice of arranging words in a kind of alphabetical sequence arose in pharaonic Egypt well before the Greeks introduced their system (Quack 2003a; Gaudard 2012; Devauchelle 2014). The new sequence was taken over from South Semitic languages, such as Classical Ethiopian and South Arabian. It is called the *halaham* order after the first four letters of that alphabet:

h – *l* – *ḥ* – *m* – *k* – *w* – *s* – ...

The earliest Egyptian example of the *halaham* sequence probably dates to the Early New Kingdom (late fifteenth century BC; Haring 2015). The system is also attested in Hieroglyphic, Hieratic, and Demotic texts from the Greco-Roman Period (Quack 2003a). The letters of the *halaham* alphabet could be designated by bird names: Plutarch (*Quaestiones convivales* 9.3.2) mentioned that the word for “ibis,” *hb*, was the first letter (*h*) of the Egyptian alphabet. The ibis was the sacred bird of Thoth, the inventor of letters according to Plato (*Phaedrus*, 274c). In some fourth/third-century BC school exercises, pupils tried to write names in alphabetical order (P.Carlsberg III p. 35–39), or practiced the Egyptian alphabet with mnemonic strategies: just as children learn in English, “A is for apple,” “B is for ...,” Egyptians had “the ibis (*hb*) was upon the ebony-tree (*hbym*),” and so forth. The initial sound of the bird-name (*h*) and that of the plant name (*h*) are the same (P.Saqqara Dem. I 27).

The Greeks introduced a different order, taken from the North-West Semitic (Phoenician) script:

α – β – γ – δ – ϵ – ...

In the period of the powerful Alexandrian philology, “there were only timid attempts to apply an alphabetical structure” (Tosi 2015, p. 623). Zenodotus of Ephesus, the first head of the newly founded Library (c. 300 BC), may have “invented” the alphabetical order for his Homeric glossary (scholia on Homer, *Odyssey* 3.444, b1, ed. Pontani). During the latter’s tenure, Callimachus compiled his *Pinakes* or “Tables” of the Library’s holdings of Greek literature; he classified them by genre, but within those sections, he applied the alphabetical sequence (Callimachus fr. 435, ed. Pfeiffer). Zenodotus’ and most of Callimachus’ works survive only in fragments, however. Among the oldest secure examples of an alphabetical order is a poetic onomasticon from Egypt on papyrus, listing words starting with δε and ευ (260–240 BC, LDAB 6984; see also LDAB 10789; for an older, possibly fourth-century BC example on a clay tablet from Syria, see LDAB 10686; the oldest epigraphic examples are from Cos, IG XII.4 103 and 104, early second century BC, cf. Daly 1967, p. 18–19; Verhasselt 2015).

The Greek alphabetical order usually does not go beyond the first or second letter (e.g. δε) in Greco-Roman times, or occasionally beyond the first four or five letters in Late Antiquity. Fully alphabetized lists are rare (LDAB 791, 792, 5091; Schironi 2009, pp. 30–42).

Both the *halaham* and alphabetical sequences were primarily applied in a scholarly or literary context (including schools, e.g. Cribiore 1996, pp. 37–42), and to some extent also in the late Ptolemaic and Roman administration and in Byzantine compilations of civil and canon law (e.g. Verhoogt 1998, p. 215).

With the creation of the Coptic alphabet, which mainly used Greek characters, the Greek alphabetical scheme was adopted for the Egyptian language. However, the names of the typical Coptic characters added at the end of the alphabet may still reflect bird names (Gaudard 2012):

Δ–Β–Γ–Δ–Ε – ... – Ψ (Shai) – Ϝ (Fai)
 – Ϝ (Hori) – Ϟ (Djandja, see *dndn*, “swan”) –
 ϟ (Kyima, see *kymy*, “black ibis”) – Ϡ (Ti).

FURTHER READING

Life in a multiethnic and multicultural society can be witnessed in a large number of archives, but the following ones are particularly interesting: the Erbstreit archive (concerning relatives of the family of Dryton and Apollonia; TM Arch 81); the archive of Apollonios *strategos* (head of the Heptakomia district during the Jewish Revolt in the early second century; TM Arch 19; see Box 20.1); and the archive of Apiones (a Christian family in the fifth century; TM Arch 15). Additional information on some of these can be found in Rowlandson (1998) and in Vandorpe et al. (2015) (archives from the Fayum).

PART VI

TRADITIONAL RELIGIOUS LIFE CHALLENGED

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

Cults, Creeds, and Clergy in a Multicultural Context

Katelijnn Vandorpe and Willy Clarysse

Pharaonic society was permeated by religion and religious institutions far more than was Classical Greek society. Both had numerous festivals, which colored local religious life throughout the year, but, although state and religion were closely connected (e.g. magistrates could sacrifice together with or instead of priests), and although laws were protected by divine power, religion in Greek society was strongly influenced by politics and the religious institutional framework was provided by the *polis*: most priests were elected from the city's elite groups for one year or longer, and the *polis* controlled priests and temples through its institutions and magistrates (e.g. the *archon basileus*); there was not really a priestly class (Parker 2011). In Ancient Egypt, on the contrary, the clergy formed a clerical elite, with its own identity, negotiating with pharaoh when necessary or becoming powerful authorities themselves when dynastic power declined; the temples were well-developed institutions and large landowners, which also performed multiple functions that we would label "secular": apart from their religious tasks, they installed temple courts, schools, libraries, and so on, and above all else they organized economic life in the local communities and cashed part of the taxes; they were an essential branch of the state. Yet another major difference touches on the relation between religion and science. Whereas in Greece, philosophy (and its scion, science) arose as a non-exclusive alternative to religious knowledge, Egyptian thought made no distinction between theology and science: both were performed within a temple context.

The polytheistic divine worlds of the Egyptians and the Greeks presented both differences (e.g. animal cults and afterlife are of no importance in Greece) and similarities: the main gods were anthropomorph, and they were present on earth in their temples; most gods enjoyed a family life, the Greek gods living in an extended family on Olympos, the

Egyptian gods usually in triads (man, wife, and child; divergent triads are found of man, wife, and mother, e.g. Tutu, his wife Tapsais, and his mother Neith; Kaper 2003a). There were relatively few main gods, but an endless number of minor deities, often local manifestations of the main ones (Greek deities are “three times countless” according to Hesiod, *Opera et Dies* 252–253; 56 000 entries of Egyptian gods and their epithets are listed in the Lexikon of Leitz et al. 2002–2003). The gods have functional roles (Amon and Zeus as kings of the gods, Mout and Hera as consorts of the main gods, Hathor and Aphrodite as sex goddesses, Isis and Demeter as mother goddesses), but they are also linked with places (Athena with Athens, Artemis with Ephesos, Hera with Argos and Samos, Thot with Ashmunein, Souchos with the Fayum).

What happened when the mass of Greek immigrants, who settled for a large part in the *chora*, introduced their gods? And was there any impact of Roman rule on religious life, when only few Roman citizens immigrated to Egypt, and they rarely chose to live in the countryside among the locals?

Alexander set the tone. He sacrificed to the Apis bull and was allegedly crowned pharaoh by the high priest of Memphis. He also traveled to the oracle of Zeus-Ammon in the Siwa Oasis, where he was proclaimed the son of the ram god; his divine filiation is reflected in his Egyptian royal titulary and in the *Alexander Romance* (Bosch-Puche 2014). Alexander and his immediate successors (his mentally deficient brother Philip III Arrhidaeus and his young son Alexander IV, who never visited the Nile country) contributed to the building or decoration of Amun’s temple complexes in Karnak and Luxor, and of the Thoth temple in Hermopolis, continuing programs started already under Nectanebo I. Only at the end of Arrhidaeus’ reign and under Alexander IV was the focus shifted toward other centers (e.g. Elephantine, Sebennytos) (Hölbl 2001, appendix; Ladynin 2014).

26.1 Egyptian Temple-Building to New Heights

The Ptolemies’ predecessors Nectanebo I and II engaged, before the destructive interludium of the second Persian dominion (Klotz 2010), in a massive program of temple-building and decoration all over Egypt. Undoubtedly impressed by the pharaonic temples, and in the wake of the Nectanebos (Ladynin 2014; Chauveau and Thiers 2006), the new Greek and Roman rulers continued to contribute to the existing temple complexes and founded some of the best-preserved Egyptian temples, such as the Edfu and Dendara complexes – still among the finest tourist attractions of modern Egypt (Coppens and Preys 2000; Hölbl 2000, 2001, 2003, 2004, 2005; Bagnall and Rathbone 2004). Not all pharaonic temples were still in use in Greco-Roman times, however: the New Kingdom Theban mortuary temples, initially constructed for the cult of the deceased pharaoh, were no longer operating or else received a new destination; the large mortuary temple of Ramesses III at Medinet Habu had partly become an administrative center; and in the Deir el-Bahari complex, Hathor’s cult was abandoned and a new chapel, cut in the rock on the temple’s third terrace, was constructed for the popular healing gods Amenhotep son of Hapu and Imhotep/Imuthes (Greek Asklepios) (Vandorpe 1995, p. 227, with Lanciers 2014).

26.1.1 Focus Areas

The large religious centers of Memphis and Thebes were still focus areas for the Greco-Roman projects. An eye-catching addition to the old temples is the monumental gate or pylon to Chonsu's temple in Karnak, nowadays called Bab el-Amara, in Antiquity known as the gate where justice was performed, where oaths were sworn, and where verdicts were pronounced (Quaegebeur 1993). Built by Ptolemy III, it became one of the many gates in the enclosure wall of the Amun complex in "hundred-gated" (*hekatompylos*) Thebes, as the city was called by Classical authors since Homer (*Iliad* 9.383). Restorations to the major Egyptian temples were carried out after natural disasters such as high inundations (e.g. repairs, including the building of dams, ordered by Tiberius for the Amun temple in Luxor; De Meulenaere 1978) or after damage due to conflicts (e.g. the enclosure wall of the Montu temple in Karnak, burned during the looting of Thebes by Ptolemy X) (Traunecker 1975 with Veisse 2004, p. 141; Rondot and Golvin 1989; further examples in Fischer-Bovet 2014, pp. 263–271).

The Ptolemaic and Roman projects were, however, not restricted to the main centers. The choice of new locations was often strategically motivated, such as the transit zone between Egypt and the Meroitic kingdom, known as the Dodekaschoinos or "Twelve-Miles District" (between Syene and Hierasykaminos, modern Maharraqa), created by Ptolemy II and later incorporated in the Triakontaschoinos, "Thirty-Miles District" (between the First and Second Cataract) (Pfeiffer 2011). The Dodekaschoinos was donated to Isis, for whom a large-scale project was initiated in Philae under Ptolemy II (Vassilika 1989), and whose statue would travel through the Dodekaschoinos while visiting the major temples of her large estate; the Roman kiosk of Qertassi (see Chapter 34), for instance, was a processional station for Isis of Philae. In the modest wake of the Ptolemies, Augustus introduced an extensive acculturation program in the buffer zone, designed to overcome the ethnic and religious differences in the area, and paying equal attention to "Egyptian" and "Nubian" gods (Török 2009). The Nubian (Blemmyan?) god Mandulis, for instance, was integrated in the family of Isis and Osiris as a local counterpart of their son Horus in the Early Ptolemaic Period. He was worshiped in a temple in Paptoulis (reign of Ptolemy II) and in a chapel near the Isis temple of Philae (186 BC); 100 years later, Blemmyan tribes were authorized to build a sanctuary at Kalabsha (Talmis) (88–80 BC) for Isis' Nubian son, a few kilometers south of her temple (Zaki 2009). In Roman times, Kalabsha became the main settlement of the buffer zone. The building of a new temple there for Mandulis was started under Augustus, who, in one of the scenes, offers crowns to Isis' sons Horus of Edfu and Mandulis (Török 2009). Mandulis of Kalabsha became a complex syncretistic figure: he was not only the heir of Osiris, but also a manifestation of the solar god; hence, a double *naos* was constructed for his two statues. In addition, Mandulis, whose oracular features were promoted, was assimilated with Apollo Pythius and Aion, "master of time and destiny" (Tallet 2016).

Further focus areas were the Edfu region (with the Horus temple) and the broader Koptite region (with the temples of e.g. Dendara, Koptos, El-Qal'a, and Shenhur), both starting points of a network of desert roads to the Red Sea harbors, quarries, and mines. The fertility god Min, the city god of Koptos, was also worshiped as "Min the guard" or "the watcher," with whom traders and travelers in the Eastern Desert sought protection

in numerous devotional graffiti (*proskynemata*) along its roads; he was also venerated by the quarrymen in the same area (I. Pan du désert; Thissen 1979; Geens 2007a, pp. 310–311). The El-Qal’a temple hosted not only the gods of nearby Koptos, but also the lion goddess who returned from the desert to Egypt. Although he never visited the country, Claudius appears in a scene on the exterior walls of the Shenhur temple, performing the ritual of raising the pole for the Koptite Min, thus ensuring “his power over the subdued people in the south and the desert regions, with which Min is associated” (Minas-Nerpel and De Meyer 2013). Thanks to improved irrigation technology, the western oases were flourishing in Roman times, and investment in temple-building was part of the development of these remote regions; the small and well-restored sandstone temple complex of Deir el-Haggar in the Dakhla Oasis, where the Theban triad Amun, Mut, and Khonsu was worshipped, was started under Nero and enlarged and decorated by the Flavians (Mills 1999; for the Theban pantheon in Qasr el-Ghueita, Kharga Oasis, see Darnell et al. 2013).

26.1.2 *Large- and Small-Scale Projects*

The list of new temple buildings in the Greco-Roman Period is impressive, although still less extraordinary than the vigorous program of Nectanebo I and II. A few large-scale temple projects were started up-country, for the construction of which a widespread handbook on Egyptian temple-building, the “Book of the Temple,” was available (Quack 2009a, 2016). The Edfu project, a symbol of Ptolemaic rule in the south, inaugurated on August 23, 237 BC, was halted for 20 years during the Great Revolt (206–186 BC) and slowly restarted thereafter; on September 10, 142 BC, after the external wall of the naos had been finished, Horus’ temple was consecrated, reportedly in the presence of Ptolemy VIII and Cleopatra II or III. The temple was completed in 57 BC (Cauville and Devauchelle 1984). The Edfu teams were then probably transferred to a new, culturally connected project at Dendara for Horus’ spouse Hathor, started next to Nectanebo I’s birth house for their son Harsiesis. The Dendara temple, famous for its zodiac on the ceiling of a rooftop chapel (now in the Louvre; Cauville 2015) and for the scene of Cleopatra VII and her teenage son Caesarion on the rear wall, was consecrated in August 30 BC, but work on the mammisi continued until the reign of Trajan (Minas-Nerpel 2012, pp. 364–371). During the “Beautiful Feast of Behdet,” Hathor traveled to her spouse Horus by boat (a journey of more than 200 km), visiting local deities on the way; the main festival act was the offering in the Behdet necropolis to Edfu’s ancestral gods in view of their regeneration (Alliot 1949–1954; Preys 2000; Cauville 2002, pp. 59–64).

Most of the remaining new sanctuaries are of modest proportions – often small-scale reproductions of the large temples of Edfu and Dendara. Apart from the numerous Sarapieia, which turned up all over Egypt and beyond (see Chapter 28), we find temples for Isis, the companion of the newly created god Sarapis (Osiris-Apis) (e.g. the unfinished Isieion at Deir el-Shelwit, Theban region), sanctuaries for popular gods (e.g. the temple of the oracular god Thoth-the-Ibis at Qasr el-Aguz, Theban West Bank, built by Ptolemy VIII; Volokhine 2002; Traunecker 2009), and sanctuaries for local gods (the beautiful Ptolemaic temple at Deir el-Medina, built on the ruins of the New Kingdom temple and dedicated according to papyrological evidence to Hathor “mistress of the (Theban) necropolis” or Hathor “on the mountain”; Lanciers 2014). Even given their modest size,



Figure 26.1 The Roman-era temple of Isis at Shenhur. View, from south to north, of the wide, columned pronaos, the small hypostyle hall (with chapel of the child god Horudja to its left), and the main temple. Upper Egypt. Source: Image courtesy Shanhur Project, KU Leuven.

construction could take several reigns before it was finished. The Shenhur temple (Figure 26.1), located south of Koptos and founded under Augustus probably on the remains of a pre-Roman structure, received a chapel for the child-god Horudja (Haryotes) under Tiberius, which may have served as a *mammisi*. This chapel was connected to the main temple under Nero, through the addition of a small, four-columned hypostyle hall. Under Trajan, a wide, columned pronaos (now badly preserved) completed the project (Willems et al. 2003; Minas-Nerpel and De Meyer 2012).

26.1.3 *New Features*

Temples were built or enlarged in ancient Egyptian style, and decorated with multiple offering scenes and Hieroglyphic texts. A new decorative feature was the substantial increase of signs displayed on the temple walls: the so-called Ptolemaic Hieroglyphs, which took the Hieroglyphic script and cryptography to new heights (Kurth 2007–2008). Typical architectural features of Greco-Roman times include the pronaos and the *mammisi*. The pronaos, a massive columned hall, called in Egyptian the “hall in front of the sanctuary,” was a transit area between the pylon and the sanctuary proper (including a New Kingdom-style hypostyle hall and the chapels). Dendara’s 18-columned pronaos is the largest built in Egypt; the 24-columned hall of Esna, construed under Claudius, is its best-preserved part. Edfu’s pronaos enclosed a library and purgatorium for ritual

purification. The mammisi or birth house (e.g. at Dendara, Edfu, and Philae) was a small structure in its own right, designed for the yearly re-enactment of the birth of the divine child of the local triad, identified with the reigning pharaoh (Daumas 1958). These structures were popular already in the time of Nectanebo I (30th Dynasty); a very late example was dedicated to Tutu in ancient Kellis (Dakhla Oasis) (Kaper 2003a; Kockelmann 2011). Dual-cult temples, with two sanctuaries on their own axes, first surface in Greco-Roman times. Examples include the Kom Ombo temple hosting the twin gods Sobek and Haroeris, and Augustus' small temple in El-Qal'a near Koptos, with two perpendicular axes. In individual cases, temple construction shows deviant patterns, such as the double row of columns girding part of the temple of Shenhur, or the unusual orientation of the temple of El-Qal'a, standing with its back to the Nile.

The actual Greek and Roman “break-in” in the Classical Egyptian temples is of a modest scale (Clarysse 2010b, pp. 286–287): the avenue (*dromos*) to the temple could be flanked by small, Greek-style shrines or statues (e.g. the Memphite Serapeum) or by Roman shrines or altars for the imperial cult (e.g. the Amun temple in Karnak; see Figure 27.2). Gradually, the Hieroglyphic and Demotic stelae set up in and around the temples were replaced by trilingual, bilingual, and monolingual Greek copies (Lewis 1993; trilingual: Hieroglyphic, Demotic, and Greek, e.g. the priestly decrees discussed later; also Hieroglyphic, Greek, and Latin, e.g. the Gallus stele, discussed in Chapter 34).

Greco-Roman architectural and decorative features could be introduced in the Egyptian-style temples, such as the double colonnade around the Shenhur temple, or the Greek circular zodiac on the astrological temple ceilings of Dendara, Shenhur, and perhaps the Min temple in Panopolis (Neugebauer and Parker 1960–1969, vol. 3, p. 204; for Panopolis, see Geens 2007a, pp. 15–16, 324). Further examples testify to a kind of “cultural idiosyncrasy” typical of the oases, such as the imitation-marble slabs decorating the Tutu temple or the Roman-style paintings in Tutu's mammisi in the Dakhla Oasis, which were combined with pharaonic-style paintings (Kaper 2012, pp. 721–725) (for Greco-Roman architectural and decorative features in tombs, see Chapter 23).

26.1.4 *Contributions by Kings, Emperors, and Individuals*

As shown by the cartouches on the buildings, almost every Ptolemy and every Roman emperor was responsible for temple construction or decoration. While in the Ptolemaic scenes, the queens regularly follow their consorts, Roman empresses are lacking from the picture. As to the decoration program, the most active rulers were the long-reigning Ptolemy VIII and Augustus, with 1217 and 1174 ritual scenes, respectively (the Würzburg database of ritual scenes; Arnold 1999; Hölbl 2000, 2001, 2003, 2004, 2005; Clarysse 2010b, pp. 275–276). Some “bad” emperors actively set up building and decoration projects, such as Domitian (185 scenes in a large number of temples), who concentrated on Upper Egypt and the oases (Klotz 2008); after his *damnatio memoriae*, his name was erased from several inscriptions, although not systematically. Only in periods of instability was there a drop-off in investments, as for instance under the reign of Ptolemy V

(21 scenes), who had to face the Great Revolt. Building and decoration activities continued until the early third century AD, although they diminished from Marcus Aurelius onward. The last imperial cartouches in the Theban area and in the western oases refer to Antoninus Pius (Medinet Habu, Deir el-Shelwit, Dendara); Caracalla's name is found in Philae, Ombos, and a few Delta and Middle Egyptian sites (Bagnall 1988, pp. 286–288). In the Fayum, there are no Greek temple inscriptions after Commodus (Frankfurter 1998, p. 27). Perhaps the reform of Septimius Severus in AD 200/1 played a role here: from then on, the *metropoleis* were responsible for the upkeep of religious buildings and cults, and Egyptian temples were not a priority for them.

Although large-scale projects for Egyptian cults had faded away, humble signs of pagan worship are attested well into the fourth century AD, despite the growing success of Christianity: the last stela for the Buchis bull of Hermonthis was dedicated in AD 340 (Grenier 1983, with Grenier 2002), about the same time ironworkers from Hermonthis sacrificed a donkey to “their” god(s) in the temple of Hatshepsut in Deir el-Bahari (Łajtar 1991, with Bagnall 2004), while in AD 394 the last Hieroglyph was carved in the temple of Harendotes at Philae. The “miniaturization” of religion, as this phenomenon is sometimes called, had always obscurely flourished in the shadow of the large-scale projects, and ultimately survived them (Quack 2009b).

The official temple-building programs were co-financed not only by temple revenues, but also by the private initiatives of priests, soldiers, and professional groups, as they proudly communicated in Hieroglyphic, Demotic, and Greek. Soldiers or their officers, whether Greek or Egyptian, could supervise or (co)subvent temple construction as individuals or as a collective initiative, thereby demonstrating their loyalty to the ruler (the main financer) or their support for the indigenous cults (Thiers 2006, 2009); a prospective promotion could be a further incentive (for the Ptolemaic Period, see Fischer-Bovet 2014, pp. 329–362). Parthenios son of Paminis, *prostates* of Isis (*p3 rwd n Is.t*, “representative of Isis”), was a member of a successful family of businessmen and priests in early Roman Koptos. He was responsible for large-scale building projects from the reign of Tiberius to that of Nero, as advertised in a series of Greek, Hieroglyphic, and Demotic stelae with Egyptian-style offerings (Vleeming 2001, nos. 179–202; Pasquali 2007). In other cases, the private subvention was imposed by the ruler: Ptolemy VIII granted small plots of land in the Edfu nome to Egyptian infantrymen, who had to cede – probably temporarily – part of their own land for the completion of the Horus temple (P.Haun. IV 70.150–153). Some private chapels were in the possession of priests, who freely sold or bequeathed them (including their religious services), such as Arensnuphis shrines (*ry.t*) in the Theban area (Lanciers 2016); an early Ptolemaic law, however, prohibited the selling or buying of temples or sacred precincts (SB XVI 12519; for the early date of the royal ordinance (304 BC), see Rodriguez 2009).

Besides investments in temple-building, land donations by rulers and individuals were popular from the Pharaonic Period onward. The custom was continued in Greco-Roman times, and even by the Christians, who privately donated land to monasteries. Thus, Ptolemy X confirmed a donation by Nectanebo II to Horus' temple in Edfu and Marcus Aurelius reiterated a donation by Ptolemy VIII to Hathor (Meeks 1979).

26.2 Priestly Power and Organization

26.2.1 *A Balanced Relation with the Ptolemies*

The temples remained powerful under the Ptolemies, with the king crowned in Memphis by the high-priest of Ptah; Ptolemy IX Soter II even celebrated with an Egyptian-style Sed festival the renewal of royal power in the 30th year of his (restored) reign (Thompson 2012, p. 116). Royal patronage went beyond temple-building: in postwar and post-rebellion times, the kings had intruders, including soldiers, expelled from the temple precincts (Fischer-Bovet 2014, pp. 263–271), and they also covered the expenses of the burial of the Apis and Mnevis bulls and donated or confirmed previous donations of land to Egypt's deities (for the Memphis temple, see Thompson 2012, pp. 106–117; for the Edfu donation, see Meeks 1972, English translation in Manning 2003a). Ptolemaic kings granted some temples (although not all) asylum in the sense of religious immunity from civil law: a type of benefaction unattested for Pharaonic Egypt. The reason for these asylum grants is debated: they may testify to the weakness of temples “trying to regain traditional rights,” or instead to the tendency of temples to “compete for royal benefactions” (Rigsby 1996, p. 544). An early example may be the Memphite Serapeum, where already in the mid-third century BC people took refuge, but so far *asylia* stelae are extant only for the first century (Rigsby 1996, pp. 540–573). Temple life of course suffered to some extent in unstable periods, when temple-building was halted (see earlier for the Edfu temple; for the Satet temple in Elephantine, see Vittmann 1997), burials of sacred animals were interrupted (for cat mummies in Thebes, see Kaplony-Heckel 2001, 2009, pp. 1183–1187), and the Buchis bull's burial in Hermonthis was poorly subsidized (Dodson 2005, p. 98).

Consultation between the king and the priestly elite on the occasion of the yearly synod at Memphis, Alexandria, or Canopus – depending on the place where the king was at that moment – might result in priestly decrees. These decrees, modeled after Greek honorary inscriptions, are a new text genre (Clarysse 2000), and were posted in Egypt's main temples all over the country; hence, multiple copies of the same decree may be extant. The decrees honored the king and the royal family with statues, festivals, or the like for explicit reasons: because the king imported expensive corn and lowered the taxes in time of famine (Canopus decree, 238 BC), won an important battle (Raphia decree, 217 BC), suppressed followers of Seth in Lykopolis during the Great Revolt (Stone of Rosetta or Decree of Memphis, 196 BC), or crushed the rival pharaoh of that revolt (second Philae decree, 186 BC) (Austin 2006: nos. 271, 276, 283; for the second Philae decree, see Nespoulous-Phalippou 2015, p. 158, n.38). The oldest – recently discovered – trilingual decree (Alexandria, 243 BC) records the beginning of the Third Syrian War, the return of the divine statues carried off by the Persians, and precautions taken by the king for the population and the temples of Egypt (El-Masri et al. 2012). The latest synodal texts date from the reigns of Ptolemy VI (162/1 BC; Lanciers 1987) and Ptolemy VIII (142 BC?; Bingen 2002).

The main Ptolemaic innovation on the organizational level was the introduction of an *epistates* or controller for each temple. The temples still played a significant role in Ptolemaic daily life, providing notarial offices for Demotic contracts (Chapter 12), instruction facilities in the house of life, and temple courts (the *laokritai*), organizing temple

oaths for small disputes (Kaplony-Heckel 1963), housing scientific literature, and ensuring local employment on temple land. The growing administrative control by the Ptolemies gradually eroded the notarial and judicial activities, and curtailed the economic power of the temples (Vandorpe 2005), although at the same time the crown issued royal decrees to fight the relapse of the temple courts (118 BC; Pestman 1985b; Méléze Modrzejewski 1975; Hauben 2016).

26.2.2 *Stronger Control Under the Romans*

After the weak reigns of the last Ptolemies, the Romans wanted to reinforce their authority over the Egyptian priestly elite. A Roman procurator acted as *archiereus* or chief priest: despite the title, an official role with secular tasks, including supervision of the regulations of religious life and administration of the temple land confiscated by the Crown. Under Hadrian, the chief priest's complex title, attested since Nero, was simplified into "*archiereus* of Alexandria and the whole of Egypt"; after Hadrian's reign, the recruitment group for this important office, formerly famous learned men, was changed (Demougin 2007). Access to the class of priests, who still enjoyed tax reductions and other privileges, was more strictly controlled by the government (BGU IV 1199, 4 BC, edict by the prefect C. Turranius; Jördens 2009, pp. 339–340). The fiscal side of temple life was regulated in a series of governmental rules incorporated in the *Gnomon of the Idios Logos* (Swarney 1970, pp. 83–96; BGU V 1210, sections 71–97). Priests who wore woolen garments, for example, were fined 200 drachmas, while those who both wore woolen garments and kept their hair long were fined 1000 drachmas (BGU V 1210, sections 75–76). These rules were applied in daily life; a priest in Soknopaiou Nesos was denounced by one of his fellow priests for committing such ritual improprieties (BGU I 16); the informer may have hoped to receive a reward (Kelly 2011, p. 302).

Although in Roman times the priestly power seemed humbled and temple activities were reduced by the limitation of the number of priests and by careful control of temple income, the priestly network was not really subject to decline (Capponi 2011), and the rich temple lands remained a major source of income into the fourth century AD. At that time, a pagan family of Greek-speaking literati attempted to win the high-priesthood in the Panopolite nome (the Ammon family, see Chapter 31). However, some cults suffered more than others from the strict rules and the lack of Roman investment in temple-building, such as the crocodile cults in the Fayum (Kockelmann 2010).

The temple's scientific role held throughout Roman times, as illustrated by the library of the Tebtynis temple (see Chapter 31; TM Arch 537); this had an impact in unexpected areas. With the help of the Alexandrian astronomer Sosigenes, Caesar turned the chaotic Roman Republican calendar, based on the lunar year, into a solar calendar including an intercalary day to be inserted every four years; this reform was inspired by the Egyptian solar calendar of 365 days, to which the priests in 238 BC had already suggested adding an intercalary day before the new year so that "the seasons should always correspond to the established order of the universe, and that it should not happen that some of the popular festivals which take place in winter are celebrated in summer"; on that special day, the festival of the royal couple was to be celebrated (Canopus decree, Austin 2006, no. 271; Hölbl 2001, p. 108). However, the leap day was never introduced in Ptolemaic Egypt,

allegedly because it was imposed by the royal house or by Greek rationalism, although there is no proof of that. Caesar's new calendar, used by both Western and Eastern churches, was fine-tuned by Pope Gregorius XIII in 1582. The Gregorian calendar became the regular calendar in the Catholic, later the Protestant, and since 1923 part of the Orthodox world (Christmas is celebrated in some Orthodox churches on December 25 and in Russia on January 7, testifying to the current decalage between the Julian and Gregorian calendars).

26.2.3 *Priestly Functions in the Egyptian Temples*

The pharaonic priestly organization and daily rituals were largely continued in Greco-Roman Egypt, including the clothing and feeding of the god(dess) by “pure ones” (Demotic *w^b*): the only priests who had access to the divine images (Clarysse 2010b, pp. 276–277, 287–288). A doorkeeper (*iry-3* or *pastophoros*) supervised the temple areas that were open to the public; he lived in a *pastophorion* or *s.t h.t-ntr*, a house-like building that was also used as his office, which was located in or close to the temple complex (Thomas 2014). Temple services were guaranteed by a rotation system of four tribes (Demotic *s3*, Greek *phyle*), to which the higher priests belonged; these were expanded in 237 BC with a fifth tribe for the new dynastic cult (see Chapter 27). Unlike the temples of first, second, and third rank, minor temples and private shrines did not employ the full range of priests. Several lower clerical functions are connected to the mummification process, burial and care of the dead, and the animal cults (Table 26.1).

In parallel to their male colleagues, Egyptian women were allowed to hold priestly functions, to perform ritual tasks, and to form or join religious associations (Colin 2002). However, most of their priestly duties consisted of musical tasks, such as singing hymns, reciting offering formulae, and rattling the sistrum (Table 26.1). These responsibilities are generally considered less prestigious. Women could also inherit or buy the function of funerary priest (*choachytes*). The minor role of Egyptian women in religion is in sharp contrast to the Greek priesthoods, including those of the dynastic cult, where women played a more prominent part (see Chapter 27).

Priestly functions were part-time jobs; according to P.Count 2 (Clarysse and Thompson 2018), 12.6% of the men in the Arsinoite nome held a lower priestly function: a high percentage, although in line with the numerous temples and shrines found in the villages (e.g. Crawford 1971, pp. 86–102 for Kerkeosiris' gods and temples). The part-time functions were possible thanks to the rotation system, and could be combined with other priesthoods (e.g. one and the same person could be *pastophoros* and choachte (Hoffmann and Quack 2014), or could cumulate priestly functions in different *phylai*). Combinations with high-profile military (see Chapters 18 and 19; Fischer-Bovet 2014, pp. 301–328) or administrative (e.g. royal scribe; Thompson 2012, p. 103; Gorre 2009) positions are also commonly attested.

The Greek “break-in” in daily religious life was of a modest scale (Clarysse 2010b, pp. 286–287). Greek language gradually penetrated the temple complexes, partly through “outsiders” who left behind dedications, hymns, building inscriptions, graffiti, and royal or imperial orders, and partly through the clergy themselves, who already in the Early Ptolemaic Period came to accept Greek oracular questions alongside the Egyptian ones, as

Table 26.1 Selection of Egyptian priestly titles in Greek and Demotic (mainly based on bilingual documentation; Vleeming 1983; Clarysse and Thompson 2006, 2, pp. 177–186, 2018).

<i>Higher priesthoods</i>		
<i>Lesonis</i>	<i>mr-šn</i>	Chief administrator of a temple, chosen for 1 year; in Roman times, this office was shared by several persons – up to 17 in Soknopaïou Nesos (P.Dime II, pp. 15–16).
<i>Prophetes</i>	<i>ḥm-ntr</i>	“God’s servant,” prophet in charge of rituals
<i>Phentpis</i>	<i>ḥm-ntr tp</i>	“First prophet,” (“second prophet,” etc.)
<i>Stolistes</i>	<i>rmt-iw=fir mnḥ</i>	“Man who cloths,” a priest who placed vestments on the divine image
<i>Pterophoros</i>	<i>šḏ md3(.t) ntr</i>	“Scribe of the divine book,” Greek “who wears feathers” (male, rarely female)
<i>Hierogrammateus</i>	<i>šḏ pr-ḥnḥ</i>	“Scribe of the house of life,” Greek “sacred scribe” (for the relation between these four titles, see Ryholt 1998)
<i>Hiereus</i> , fem. <i>hiereia</i>	<i>wḥb</i> , fem. <i>wḥb.t</i>	“Pure one,” a general priestly title referring either to a higher priesthood or, more specifically, to the <i>pterophoros</i> or <i>hierogrammateus</i> , and to be distinguished from the <i>lesoneis</i> and prophets (male and female)
<i>Lower priesthoods</i>		
<i>Pastophoros</i>	<i>iry-ʿ3</i> (earlier read as <i>wn</i> or <i>wn-pr</i>)	Doorkeeper, supervising the temple area open to the public; in Greek, “ <i>pastos</i> -bearer” (Hoffmann and Quack 2014; Thomas 2014, pp. 122–126) (male, rarely female)
<i>Isionomos</i>	<i>in-wwy</i>	Warden of the temple of Isis (priest or priestess), lit. “bringer of the far one?” (male and female) (Depauw 1998)
<i>Thallophoros</i>		“Bearer of young olive shoots”
<i>Phoibetes</i>	<i>šmʿy.t</i>	Priestess of Aphrodite/Hathor, linked to prophecy
	<i>ihy.t</i>	Singer, musician (female)
<i>Somphis</i>	<i>dnf</i>	Sistrum player (female)
<i>Ibioboskos</i>	<i>b3k n3 ḥb.w</i>	Dancer (male and female)
		“Servant/slave (<i>b3k</i>) of the ibises,” in Greek “ibis-breeder”
<i>Ibiotaphos</i>	<i>sdm n3 ḥb.w</i>	“Servant (<i>sdm</i>) of the ibises,” in Greek “ibis-burier”
<i>Hierakotaphos</i>	<i>sdm p3 bīk</i>	(male and female); “servant (<i>sdm</i>) of the falcon,” in Greek “falcon-burier”
<i>Theagos</i>	<i>t3y-ntr.w</i>	“Porter of the gods”: priest carrying the sacred animals to their tomb (Dils 1995)
<i>Taricheutes</i> , <i>paraschistes</i> , <i>archentaphiastes</i>	<i>rmt-iw=f qs, wyt</i> , <i>ḥr-ḥb, ḥtm-ntr</i> <i>rmt inpw</i>	Priests involved in the process of mummification (Vleeming 1995): • embalmer (<i>rmt-iw=f qs</i> and <i>wyt</i>), Greek <i>taricheutes</i>: “pickler”; <i>paraschistes</i>: “one who slits up” • chief embalmer priest (<i>archentaphiastes</i>) • in Demotic, also “lector priest” (<i>ḥr-ḥb</i>) or “god’s sealer, divine chancellor” (<i>ḥtm-ntr</i>), “man of Anubis” (<i>rmt inpw</i>)
<i>Choachytes</i> fem. <i>choachytis</i>	<i>w3ḥ-mw</i>	“Water-pourer”: a funerary priest or priestess who took care of the tomb, performing the required libations (Vleeming 1995)

well as to record their decrees in Greek and Egyptian; in Roman times, they had their yearly reports on sacred objects and priestly staff written in Greek (TM Arch 235), and even in the deep south they were well acquainted with Greek traditions and rituals (Tallet 2016). Egyptian priestly titles were either transcribed into Greek, such as the *mr-šn*, who became a *lesonis*, but more often they were translated, although the Egyptian and Greek titles unfortunately do not always correspond (Table 26.1); the doorkeeper *iry-š* became the *pastophoros*, “*pastos*-bearer,” probably referring to his cult role; the embalmer’s title *myt* was translated, rather disrespectfully, as “pickler” (*taricheutes*) or “one who slits up” (*paraschistes*) (Vleeming 1995, p. 244). Religious literature, whether myths, prayers, ritual, or mortuary texts, originally written in Hieratic, was continued in Demotic well into the Roman Period (Stadler 2012b), but the priestly manual “The book of the Temple,” translated into Demotic in the Saite Period, was further translated into Greek in the Roman Period, showing that Greek had replaced Egyptian as the language of ritual in the new mixed cultural milieu (Quack 2016).

26.3 From Interpretatio Graeca to Henotheism

The Olympian gods, connected to the social life of the Greek *polis*, had lost much of their appeal by the time the Greeks massively immigrated to the kingdom of Egypt. Olympians were not omnipresent in the *polis* of Alexandria, as one might expect. Already in the Early Ptolemaic Period, for instance, Greek women sought protection for pregnancy, childbirth, and neonates from the Egyptian cat goddess Bastet, whom they called Bubastis, and who had taken over the functions of Artemis. In her recently discovered sanctuary, founded by Queen Berenice II, wife of the third Ptolemy, Greek-style limestone and terracotta figures of cats have been discovered, donated as *ex votos* by Greek women to Bubastis, not to Artemis (the statuettes are now studied by Mervat Seif El-Din, see Carrez 2014; Abd el-Maksoud et al. 2015). Moreover, there is hardly any evidence for royal support of the cults of Apollo and Artemis, or of Zeus and his consort Hera, except for Zeus Soter, “Savior,” whose statue stood on top of the Pharos. The cults that were officially stimulated by the Ptolemies were rather that of Aphrodite and the mystery cults of the terrestrial deities Dionysus and Demeter. The support for the latter goddess, who taught the fundamentals of life, may be due to her identification with Isis. Dionysus, the “god of the wine and revelry, of drama and of the luxury of nature and of man” (Fraser 1972, p. 205), who freed people from daily cares, and to whom the Ptolemies traced their lineage, represented the ideal of *tryphe*, “luxuriousness,” in its more positive meaning of “abundance”; this was one of the propaganda themes of the Ptolemies, symbolized by the cornucopia (Heinen 1983b), and some Ptolemies even assumed the surname Tryphon. Dionysus was celebrated in the spectacular Grand procession or *Pompe*, staged by Ptolemy Philadelphus (Thompson 2000). Cleopatra VII’s father Ptolemy XII became formally the “New Dionysus” (*Neos Dionysos*), and she and Marc Antony liked to advertise their adherence to the cult (Fraser 1972, pp. 189–212). Epigraphic evidence bears witness to mysteries performed for the god (Venit 2016, pp. 95–96). In Upper Egyptian Ptolemais, Dionysus received a *Dionyseion* (I.Prose I 3 and 6; P.Oxy. LXXIX 5202), and was worshiped alongside the founder of the new polis, Ptolemy I Soter, along with a large number of regional

deities, including the triad of nearby Panopolis, Min (Greek Pan), Triphis, and Kolanthes (Bagnall 1998; Vallet 2015). An association of Dionysiac artists was active, with royal support, in both Alexandria and Ptolemais, including tragic, comic, and epic poets, actors, musicians, and technicians (Le Guen 2002, p. 35; P.Dryton 50, introduction). Although in Roman Egypt it no longer received official patronage, Dionysus' cult remained popular outside the *poleis*, as shown by terracotta figurines and tombs bearing Dionysiac imagery (Venit 2016, pp. 95–96).

In the Egyptian *chora*, references to Greek gods are usually Greek names for Egyptian deities – a phenomenon known as the *interpretatio Graeca* (or *interpretatio Aegyptiaca*, depending on which way influence was executed). Thus, Re was “translated” into Helios, Thoth into Hermes, and so forth (Herodotus 2.50; von Lieven 2016). The choice of a Greek divine name to correspond to an Egyptian god was apparently already standardized when Herodotus visited Egypt in the fifth century BC. The reasons are not always easy to trace, but usually one function of the god – not necessarily his or her main characteristic – was determining: thus, Amon and Zeus were both king of the gods, Mut and Hera were both wife of the king, Min and Pan were both ithyphallic gods, Hathor and Aphrodite were goddesses of sex, and Isis and Demeter were mother goddesses. In other cases, however, the identification is far from self-evident, and rather obscure mythological details are called upon to explain it (von Lieven 2016).

This so-called syncretism, well known also for the Roman gods, was mainly applied to the major deities; thousands of minor ones were not part of this phenomenon. Also, the identification was often limited to the name: Montu-Re became Apollo in Greek, his Theban temple became the Apolloneion, and the lady Senmonthis had as Greek double name Apollonia (P.Erbstreit, p. 20), although the god and his temple remained depicted in Egyptian style. Even Egyptians used the Greek name of their god in Greek contexts, instead of transliterating the Egyptian name. Thus, a priest serving Sobek and the cow goddess Hathor in Upper Egyptian Pathyris became in a Greek notarial agreement a “priest of Suchos and Aphrodite” (P.Grenf. I 27). This example shows that not all major Egyptian gods had a Greek pendant: the crocodile god Sobek normally had his name transliterated (and slightly adapted) as Suchos rather than being identified with Olympian Kronos, as happened in Tebtynis (the equation Soknebtynis–Kronos is attested from AD 37 onward; Rübsam 1974, pp. 181–182). But when, in Pathyris, the name of Hathor (*H.t-hr*) was followed by her local epithet *nb.t-in.ty*, “mistress of Gebelein,” this was transliterated in Greek as *Hathornebentaigis*, leaving Aphrodite out of the picture (P.Erbstreit 13.32). Horus of Edfu was identified with Apollo in the toponym Apollonopolis, but in a Greek land survey “Horus of Bakhthis, great god, lord of the sky” (*Hr Bhd.ty ntr 3 nb pt*) became *Harbakterienetonebe* (P.Haun. IV 70.152). The *interpretatio Graeca* was not a coherent system, and a single Greek god could be identified with more than one Egyptian one and vice versa (Table 26.2), especially in the case of minor gods. Shai, Egyptian god of destiny, for instance, was linked to Agathos Daimon and Eudaimon, but also to the Thracian deity Heron and other divine creatures, among them Soter (Quaegebeur 1975, pp. 263–271). The *interpretatio Graeca* is reflected in place names and double names (Table 26.2).

Once the *interpretatio Graeca* was generally accepted, mythological stories of Greek and Egyptian gods could become mixed up, and Egyptian gods could be represented with the

Table 26.2 The *interpretatio Graeca*: some examples.

<i>Greek god</i>	<i>Egyptian god</i>	<i>Place names (TM Geo)</i>	<i>Greco-Egyptian double names (Coussement 2016, appendix; Broux 2015b, pp. 177–182)</i>
Aphrodite	Hathor	Aphroditopolis (Atfih) = <i>Tp-ih.t</i> , “Head (of) (the) Cow”	Hathor-ity alias Aphrodisia
Apollo	Horus	Apollonopolis Magna (Edfu), main god Horus	Apollonios alias Horos
	Theban Montu	Apolloneion (Theban temple of Montu)	Apollonia alias Senmonthis, “The daughter of Montu”
Ares	Onuris-Shu		
Artemis	Bastet (Bubastis)		
Asklepios	Imhotep/Imuthes		Asklepiades alias Imouthes Asklepias alias Senimouthis
Athena	Neith (in Sais, the Fayum) Thoeris (in Oxyrhynchos)		
Demeter	Isis or Opet Thermuthis	Demetrium (Theban temple of Opet, also called <i>Papoerieion</i> in Greek)	Demetrios alias Petermouthis, “He who was given by Thermuthis” Dionysios alias Petosiris
Dionysus	Osiris		
Dioskouroi	twin crocodiles		
Helios	Re	Heliopolis = <i>ḥnmw-Rʿ</i>	
Hephaestus	Ptah	cf. Prophet of Hephaestus (Theban prophet of Ptah, also called <i>phenptaios</i> in Greek)	
Hera	Mut	Heraion (Theban temple of Mut)	Herais alias Tiesris, “The one of the Sacred Lake” (i.e. of Mut)
Herakles (Hercules)	Chonsu	Herakleion = <i>Pr-Ḥnsw</i> , “House of Chonsu” (Theban temple of Chonsu, also called <i>Chesebaieion</i> in Greek = <i>Ḥnsw-nb-ḥt</i> , “master of time”) Herakleopolis = <i>Ḥw.t-nn-nsw</i> , “House of the royal child” (i.e. Chonsu)	
	Herisjef, Somtut		Herakleides alias Semtheus
Hermes	Thoth	Hermopolis (Ashmunein), main god Thoth	Hermophilos alias Phibis, “The ibis”
Kronos	Geb		Kronion alias Psenkebkis, “The son of Geb”
	Sobek/Suchos in Soknebtynis		

Table 26.2 (Continued)

<i>Greek god</i>	<i>Egyptian god</i>	<i>Place names (TM Geo)</i>	<i>Greco-Egyptian double names (Coussement 2016, appendix; Broux 2015b, pp. 177–182)</i>
Nemesis	Petbe, a revenge god		Nemesion alias Panetbeus, “The one of the avenging demons”
Pan	Min	Panopolis (Achmim) = <i>Hnty-Min</i>	Paniskos alias Peteminis
Sarapis	Osiris		
Typhon	Seth		
Zeus (<i>Dios</i> in genitive case)	Amun(-Re)/ Ammon	Diospolis Magna (Thebes), main god Amun-Re	

See Vandorpe (1995) and Kaper (2000, p. 129).

attributes of their Greek counterparts, as happened also in Asia Minor with the multi-breasted Artemis of Ephesus or the Lycian Leto, who in Ovidius’ *Metamorphoses* (6.339–382) gave birth to Apollo and Artemis in Lycia, not on Delos (*Metamorphoses* 6.185–192). Thus, when the Horus child, represented with the Egyptian youth lock in terracottas and bronzes, holds a club, he becomes an infant Herakles, and probably a form of Chonsu (Quaegebeur 1987, p. 161). Neith, the mother of the sphinx god Tutu, is now represented as Athena, with a Greek dress and a helmet (Figure 28.1; Quaegebeur 1983a, pp. 308–309). In votive wooden panels of the Roman period, Sobek-Geb is a bearded Greek Zeus-like figure, holding a crocodile in his arms (Rondot 2013, pp. 75–80, 101, 358 (a bronze statue)).

The *interpretatio Graeca* was reflected in iconography only outside the temple context. The numerous terracotta figurines of Greco-Roman Egypt, cast in double molds since the Hellenistic Period, often show Greek stylistic conventions, such as Isis in Greek dress carrying a cornucopia (Orlin et al. 2016, p. 346), or the divine child with the club of Herakles, which made Harpocrates into Chespochrates (Chonsu the child) or little Semtheus.

As few Roman immigrants went to live in the *chora* and Latin was not commonly used in Egypt, few examples testify to an *interpretatio Romana*. If Egyptian deities were recorded in Latin texts, they were usually called by their common name (e.g. Osiris, Anubis, Harpocrates) and not “translated,” except in the case of “Jupiter Hammon Chnubis” (the ram god Amon-Chnum), to whom a granite stela from Philae was dedicated on the occasion of the opening of a quarry (CIL III Suppl. 1 6630, AD 201–203). The *interpretatio Romana* is better attested in iconography and is often connected to the military. The Thracian rider god Heron, for instance, imported under the Ptolemies by mercenaries and sometimes assimilated to Horus, became popular in the Roman Fayum, when his royal uniform with solar rays was replaced by that of a Roman officer or emperor (Bingen 1994; Fischer-Bovet 2014, pp. 349–350); a similar transformation is found in some of the terracottas representing Horus, Anubis, Apis, Bes, and Harpocrates (Nachtergaele 1996, pp. 136–138). In the Romanized communities of North Africa, the

interpretatio Romana (or *interpretatio Africana*) is better represented, when in the Imperial Period Libyan-Punic deities are worshiped as Roman gods, although they maintain local features (Cadotte 2007).

A different phenomenon, which also led to identification of gods, even within the same cultural sphere, has been termed “henotheism” by modern scholars (Versnel 2011, pp. 280–303). Gods claim a unique and superior status in competition with other gods, associated with notions of omnipotence: the acclamation εἷς θεός, “one god,” which appears from the Hellenistic period onward, means that a god is “unique” (there is no other god like this one), not that he or she is the only one existing. The same notion is expressed by *monos*, *hypsistos*, and even *akbar* (not simply “great,” but “the greatest,” in comparison with other gods). The believer is linked to his or her god by personal devotion, is completely dependent upon them (he or she is a slave, and he or she is punished as a sinner when he or she does not obey the god), without rejection or neglect of the other gods. Competing gods exist side by side, each of them being the one, the only, the greatest at the moment of veneration. In her aretalogies, Isis is the great champion in a divine competition for omnipotence, absorbing all other goddesses (that is why she has 10 000 names, *myrionymos*), but she remains at the same time a goddess, with her female sex, her name, her myths, and her cult. Egyptian gods are all “great,” “very great,” or even “thrice very great” (Quaeghebeur 1986). The new god Sarapis combines the powers of Osiris (he is the husband of Isis and his *kalathos* symbolizes the yearly rebirth of nature), Pluto (he is often accompanied by the three-headed dog Cerberus), Dionysus, and Zeus-Helios (as he is called in oracle questions, e.g. P.Oxy. VIII 1149).

In the Roman Period, this divine omnipotence is sometimes expressed in iconography, when symbols of power are added to the image of a god, which absorbs the powers of other gods. Thus, the sphinx god Tutu has a tail ending in the head of a snake, a crocodile’s head in front of him (showing his power over the demons of Neith, which spread illness and disaster over the world), and some other animal heads on his back. Similar symbolic representations, including the falcon of Horus, enrich the Greek-style wooden panels studied by Rondot (2013, pp. 303–307). These are the visual representation of what the aretalogies describe. Divine power can also be copied from imperial power. Thus, we find the falcon-headed Horus represented with the armor of a Roman emperor, or Apis with bull’s head and Roman military costume addressing the soldiers in a Roman *adlocutio*.

At the same time, it is generally accepted in this period that the universe is created and ruled by a nameless divine principle (τὸ θεῖον, ὁ θεός, οἱ θεοί), which also functions in philosophical discussion (the “unmoved mover” of Aristotle) or in wisdom texts (Vergote 1963). This divine principle, for which there is no cult, no myth, no prayer, becomes in the Hellenistic period personalized in Tyche. “The one god and the many operate on different levels and have different tasks, preserving a complementary co-existence ... ‘the gods’ were devoid of cult, whereas traditional gods derived their very identity from their cultic existence, including sacrifice and prayer, and from iconography and myth. Since the two entities are incomparable, there was no competition between them” (Versnel 2011, p. 305).

In Antiquity, monotheism and polytheism were not mutually exclusive; they functioned on different levels. When the creator god and ruler of the universe, who is also the guardian of human ethic behavior, becomes personalized in the Jewish Jahweh and receives a cult of his own, something changes. The other gods are not simply eclipsed by the main

god of the moment, but are permanently demoted to the status of demons or angels. The new god of the Christians also has his heavenly court, with seven (or more) heavens and nine categories of angels, but the traditional gods now become his enemies. The exclusive and radical monotheism does, however, include a divine family (father, son, and holy spirit), a cult of Mary “mother of god,” a veneration of the martyrs and saints as intercessors with the highest divinity, and a mixture of different heavenly powers in magic, which in Christian times is even more prominent than before.

26.4 Animal Cults and Animal Mummies: A Thriving Business

Although Egypt was “not a country of many animals” (Herodotus 2.65.2), animal worship became a distinct feature of Egyptian religion from the Late Period: “degraded superstitions” (*pravae errores*), according to Cicero (*Tusculanae Disputationes* 5.78). A diverse array of animals became the object of cult worship, among them bulls, cows, ibises, rams, jackals, cats, and crocodiles – but not pigs. Sacred animals were more approachable than the cult statue of the local god, who only left his fortified sanctuary on the occasion of festivals. The Memphite Apis bull was, for instance, visited by pilgrims and tourists in his courtyard (Thompson 2012, p. 183), while the sacred crocodiles of the Fayum god Petesouchos could be fed by visitors – among them the Roman senator L. Memmius (Bagnall and Derow 2004, no. 69). People could name their child after their favorite sacred animal, such as Pbekis, Tbekis, and Senpbekis, called after Horus’ falcon (Demotic *byk*), and Pemsais, “the crocodile” (*P3-msh*).

The manifestation of a god in a living animal or their portrayal as an animal or hybrid creature must have discomfited some Greeks, who – except in the case of the god Pan – associated animal and half-animal forms with marginal creatures such as satyrs (Dunand and Zivie-Coche 2004, p. 277), or who sacrificed animals to the gods – particularly pigs (Clarysse and Thompson 2006, 2, p. 208). The Romans, although intrigued by the exotic spirit of Egyptian religion, displayed an aversion to animal worship (Smelik and Hemelrijk 1984, p. 1945). Octavian refused to visit the Apis bull at Memphis, because he was “accustomed to worshiping gods, not cattle” (Cassius Dio 51.16.5; Thompson 2012, p. 247). The Egyptian tradition of animal cult nevertheless continued more intensively than ever under the patronage of Ptolemies and emperors, resulting in a thriving business for the clergy. The emperors, unlike the Ptolemaic kings, hardly took part in the rituals involved, although in AD 70 the prince Titus was present at the consecration of the Apis bull (Suetonius, *Titus* 5; for Egyptian animal worship, see Kessler 1989; Houlihan 1996; Dils 2000; for the organization and administration of the sacred animal cults at Saqqara, see also Chapter 30).

The sacred animal by excellence was chosen to become the incarnation of a particular deity on the basis of specific markings. The Apis bull should be black with an inverted white triangle on the forehead (Thompson 2012, p. 183); in Hadrian’s reign, several years were needed to find such a specimen in the Nile country according to the *Historia Augusta* (*Hadrian* 12.1). As part of the local festival, the sacred falcon was chosen from among several candidates that had been reared within the temple precinct and was presented to

the people on the platform between the two pylon wings, before being coronated in the temple (Cauville 2002, pp. 72–73; Coppens 2009). The temple animal was worshiped, and after it had died a natural death, people mourned at its – often expensive – public burial; for the 70-day mourning period of the Apis bull, twin girls played the sister-goddesses Isis and Nephthys during the ceremonies (for the twins Taous and Tages, see Chapter 30).

A whole species, such as falcons or ibises, could also be worshiped. Such “multiple” sacred animals could have their own farms (e.g. *ibiones*) and were looked after by their own staff, including ibis-, falcon-, and cat-breeders (*ibioboskoi*, *hierakoboskoi*, *ailouroboskoi*). The animal cults, with their ibis-breeders, ram-buriers, and the like served as a regular source of employment for the Egyptians (Clarysse and Thompson 2006, 2, p. 179). A Demotic papyrus lists sanctions (including imprisonment) for those who maltreated such sacred creatures (Lippert 2004). A Roman visitor who accidentally killed a cat in Alexandria was lynched by an infuriated mob, notwithstanding the intervention of local officials (Diodorus Siculus 1.83.8–9).

Alive, however, these “multiple” sacred animals did not become the object of rituals as did the sacred animal by excellence. Their religious “value” was obtained by their mummified body, which was to be offered to the deity. Research of mummified animals reveals that many died prematurely and violently, small crocodiles having their muzzles amputated (Kom Ombo), and jackals (Asyut) and cats (Boubasteion of Saqqara) being strangled (Legras 2016), all in order to be mummified, offered, and buried in catacombs in dizzying numbers, such as in the ibis galleries in the Memphite necropolis (see Chapter 30) or the ibis, falcon, baboon, jackal, and cat cemeteries near Achmim (Geens 2007a, pp. 34–35, 314). This practice became a profitable business for the clergy, who provided thousands of pilgrims with mummified sacred animals (for the economic impact of animal cults on society, see Ikram 2015). The priests sometimes deceived their clients by selling, instead of a falcon, a mummified hawk, or instead of a baby crocodile, a mummified monitor lizard, or even a simple bundle of papyrus wrapped up in linen (Girton College Cambridge, inv. no. LR.543; see online Lawrence Room Catalogue).

The Apis bull enjoyed a national cult. It could come from any place in Egypt, and priests from all over the country attended the installation ceremony (for provenances of the Apis bulls, see Thompson 2012, appendix D). In many other cases, the cult of a particular animal was limited to certain areas, leading to local tensions. The Ptolemies made it a capital offense to catch, among other things, the Oxyrhynchos (“sharp-nosed”) fish (P.Yale I 56, 100 BC), to which the Middle Egyptian city owed its name, and under the Romans its consumption led in a dispute between the people of Oxyrhynchos and nearby Kynopolis: when the latter put the sacred fish on the table, the former took revenge by catching, sacrificing, and eating a dog, sacred to the Kynopolite residents (Plutarch, *De Iside et Osiride* 72). Another longstanding quarrel was that between the priests of the “crocodile nomes” (the Koptite and Ombite nomes, worshipping the crocodile gods Sobek and Geb) and the “falcon nomes” (the Tentyrite and Diospolite (Mikros) nomes, worshipping the falcon god Horus and Osiris-Neferhotep). Emperor Claudius and his prefect L. Aemilius Rectus tried to end this bickering, including by altering two offering scenes at the Dendara temple (Figure 26.2):

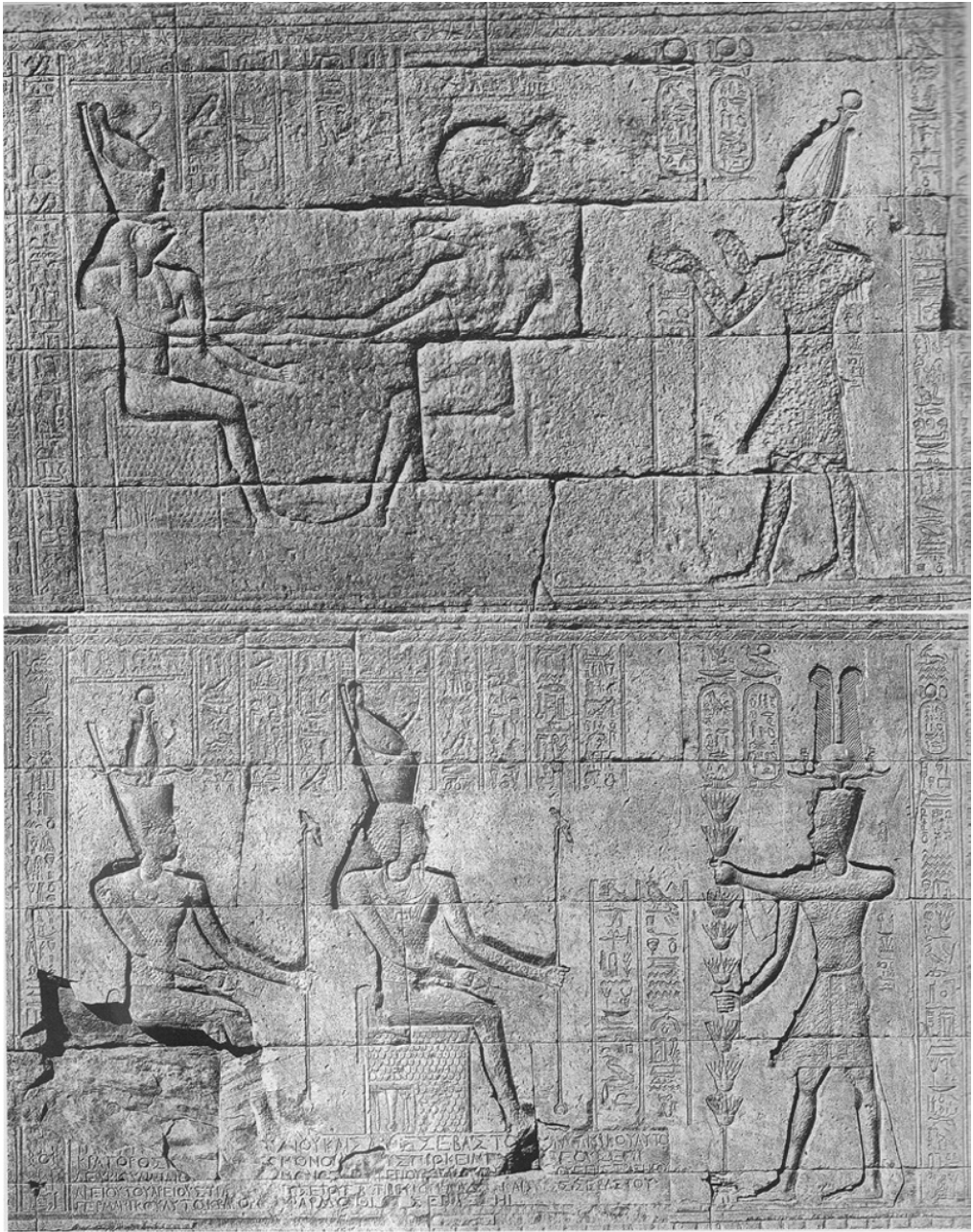


Figure 26.2 The “Pax Romana at Dendara.” Horus of Edfu and Sobek of the Fayum shake hands – but only from the reign of Claudius on. This “shocking image” is explained in a Greek inscription on the scene below. Source: Temple of Dendara, east wall, cf. Cauville 2007. Photographs by A. Lecler. © IFAO.

in a scene with the couple Horus and Hathor, the latter is replaced by an inelegant representation of a long-armed, crocodile-headed Sobek, who shakes hands with his rival, falcon-headed Horus; in the second relief, the god Harsomtous is replaced by Osiris-Neferhotep, who thus becomes the companion of Geb (Cauville 2007). A Greek inscription reveals the motive: “for peace and concord” (*eirene kai homonoia*) (I.Portes 30). But the coupling of the crocodile and falcon gods did not solve the rivalry; on the contrary, it became notorious even outside Egypt. A century later, “there still blazes a lasting and ancient feud, an undying hatred, a wound that can never be healed” (Juvenal, *Satire* 15.33–36, translation by Braund 2004), and another century after that, the people of Dendara, who detested crocodiles, caught and maltreated them before eating them, while the Koptite residents took revenge by crucifying falcons (Aelianus, *De natura animalium* 10.21, 24).

26.5 Life After Death

One of the most conspicuous aspects of Egyptian culture was the importance of the afterlife. Egyptians firmly believed that life continued after death if the deceased received a proper burial, with mummification. A good life on earth was a guarantee for a happy afterlife, because the deceased had to defend themselves before Osiris and the divine court. When they succeeded, they became (part of) Osiris himself and were resurrected like him. With the help of the magical spells of the Book of the Dead, they vanquished the terrors of the underworld and accompanied the sun god on his nightly travel under the earth to be rejuvenated every day. At the same time, they could enjoy in their tomb the offerings brought them by family members and funerary priests. This was a far more interesting perspective than the bleak Greek (or Jewish) underworld, where the dead were mere shadows, longing for their earlier real life. Greeks readily took over the Egyptian view of a blessed afterlife, as is shown by the Ptolemaic lists of mummies cared for by the *choachytai*-priests in Thebes (Clarysse 1995, pp. 9–11, 16–17) and Hawara (Uytterhoeven 2009, pp. 506–508; 25% Greek names in Ptolemaic times, 56% Greek names in Roman times). In the Roman Period, mummification was the preferred burial type in Greek milieus. The mummy portraits of that period represent the deceased in a Greek fashion, with a Greek haircut and Greek clothing and jewelry, and the names preserved on the mummies are all Greek (see Chapter 23). These people were thus clearly the “Greek” elite of the Fayum and Antinoopolis.

The Greek world view that came closest to that of the Egyptians was represented by the myth of Demeter, where Demeter’s daughter Kore is first abducted by Hades, but then returns every year to the world of the living as a symbol of fertility and renewal, like Osiris. This myth was celebrated in the mysteries of Eleusis. In two tombs of the catacombs of Kom el-Choufaga, the mummification of Osiris by Anubis in Egyptian style is paralleled on the same wall by the abduction of Kore in the presence of Aphrodite, Athena, and Artemis in Greek style (Guimier-Sorbets et al. 2015; for the mixture of cultural elements in the decoration of private tombs, see Chapter 23).

FURTHER READING

For a general background on polytheistic religions, see Versnel (2011). Specialized articles on different aspects of Late Egyptian religion can be found in *Egyptian Religion: The Last Thousand Years. Studies Dedicated to the Memory of Jan Quaegebeur* (Clarysse et al. 1998). Sauneron (1988) is still a good introduction to the role of the Egyptian priesthood. For the mixture of Egyptian and Greek myths in Alexandria, see Guimier-Sorbets et al. (2015). For burial practices, see Chapter 23.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

A Successful Ruler and Imperial Cult

Stefan Pfeiffer

All forms of cultic acts, which are normally reserved for the immortal gods, are expressions of ruler cult, if they are devoted to a king or emperor. “Cult” means religious practices or rituals in the form of offerings in kind (sacrifices or libations), hymns of praise, or other more complex rituals. By receiving divine honors, the ruler becomes part of a superhuman sphere and is equated with the immortal gods. The adorer who made offerings to a ruler does so with the same intention as the adorer who worships Zeus or Amun: in a *do ut des* principle of reciprocity, he hopes to benefit from the ritual act. In exchange for the offering, the gods or divine rulers guarantee the adorer’s welfare. The ruler cult for the “mortal god” (who depends on the grace of the immortal gods) may be defined by the following typical features: the ruler possesses temples or holy precincts; he owns altars, on which offerings are made; he shares a temple with other gods as a “temple-sharing deity” (*synnaos theos*); he has a priesthood and feasts, during which he is bestowed with the same honors as the gods; and sometimes he can be identified with already existing divinities (Weber 2010, p. 61). The only difference between the supernatural gods and the world-immanent powerful ruler was that the former were usually immortal (with few exceptions, e.g. Osiris).

It remains unknown whether the deified rulers were perceived by their worshippers as human beings, as entities between men and gods, as semi-divine entities, or as gods proper. Maybe all four qualities applied at once, since social groups like peasants, citizens, soldiers, intellectuals, and philosophers, with their different cultural and religious backgrounds, may have adopted very different attitudes toward their rulers. It is, however, possible to investigate the effects and aims of the ruler cult. Scholars usually think that ruler cult is a political religion: an act of loyalty to the ruler, who grants in exchange his benevolence to his subjects (Gauthier 1985). In this conception of ruler cult, the communicative

intention of cult, which is fundamental to every cultic act, is stressed. Every subject, or every autonomous city or confederation, which elevates the ruler/emperor to a god and considers him worthy of divine honors, may expect him *to behave like a god* – the divine ruler is obliged to show, for example, his euergetism toward the worshippers. With regard to Ptolemaic Egypt, Weber (2010, p. 57) has put it thus: “The praxis of different cults for the ruler is to be considered in a broader context of communication between king and the population of his kingdom. It was not one-sided top down but a dialectical arrangement.”

27.1 The Ptolemies

Before we discuss the ruler cult in Ptolemaic Egypt, we must realize that for the Egyptian subjects, the ruler was at the same time pharaoh, even if he did not accept this role in reality. In older literature, one finds the erroneous statement that the pharaoh was divine, based on the fact that he had titles like “son of Ra,” the “young Horus,” and so on. These denominations seem to characterize him as a god; however, as research has demonstrated, the pharaoh was not a god as an individual, but held a divine office and played the role of a god in specific circumstances (Posener 1960; O’Connor and Silverman 1995); thus, he only had a divine Ka – a spirit, which transcended from one pharaoh to the next, and which was the actual receiver of the royal cult. So, it is not surprising that cults or temples for the living pharaoh are not attested: only the Ka or aspects of the office were venerated. With the Ptolemies, new forms of the cult for the king, who at the same time was pharaoh, were introduced to Egypt. At first, there were a Greek-style ruler and a dynastic cult, both of which were later supplemented by an Egyptian form. In contrast to the ancient Egyptian royal cult for the Ka, it was now the person of the ruler who received cultic worship.

27.1.1 *Greek Ruler and Dynastic Cult*

There were two Greek forms of ruler cult: first, veneration of the king, whether alone or together with his spouse and, sometimes, family; and second, devotion to the ruler together with his ancestors, which is preferably called “dynastic cult.”

The roots of Ptolemaic ruler cult lay outside Egypt, in a region that was not even under direct Ptolemaic control. It was the Rhodians who established Ptolemy I as a god of their city, in return for his having saved Rhodes from being conquered by Demetrius Poliorcetes in 305 BC. The foreign king had preserved the independence of the island. Diodorus states (20.100.3-4):

In the case of Ptolemy, since they wanted to surpass his record by repaying his kindness with a greater one, they sent a sacred mission into Libya to ask the oracle at Ammon if it advised the Rhodians to honor Ptolemy as a god. Since the oracle approved, they dedicated in the city a square precinct, building on each of its sides a portico a stade long, and this they called the Ptolemaeum. (Translation Geer, Loeb Classical Library)



Figure 27.1 Architrave of the portico from the Hermopolis precinct of Ptolemy III. Source: Image courtesy Holger Kockelmann.

The king was now venerated as a god in a *polis* cult (Hazzard 1992, pp. 52–56). As shown by this example, the ruler cult was often initiated by non-royal institutions or private persons and organizations – either actually of their own volition or only allegedly so, and in fact at the behest of the royal administration (cf. the decree of the *Nesiotai*: IG XII 7.506 = Syll.³ 390). There are no archeological remains of Ptolemy’s temple mentioned by Diodorus, but it may have looked similar to the temple of Ptolemy III and Berenice II in Hermopolis Magna (Egypt) (Figure 27.1); the following donatory inscription of an architrave of its portico gives the same details of infrastructure as Diodorus for the Rhodian *temenos*:

(Dedicated) to the king Ptolemy, son of Ptolemy and Arsinoe, the Sibling gods, and to queen Berenice, the sister and wife, the Benefactor gods, and to Ptolemy and Arsinoe, the Sibling gods, the statues and the temple and everything which is inside the precinct and the stoa. The cavalry stationed in the nome of Hermopolis because of their goodwill toward them.
(Translation Geer, Loeb Classical Library)

Excavations have revealed an enormous precinct of 130×60 m with a Doric portico surrounding it (Sjöqvist 1954, pp. 95–97). Ptolemy III was venerated here together with his wife, Berenice II. This is a typical phenomenon of Ptolemaic ruler cult: the king’s wife, and also his children, were often included. In this case, even his parents were venerated.

The inclusion of the king's ancestors brings us to the second form of Greek ruler cult: the official dynastic cult. In a long process starting in the time of Ptolemy II (who deified his deceased parents as "Savior Gods," *Theoi Soteres*), the royal house or royal administration established the cult for the whole dynasty. Already around 290 BC, Ptolemy I had established an eponymous priesthood of Alexander the Great in Alexandria (Fraser 1972, pp. 213–226). From then on, the priest of Alexander, who changed every year, was mentioned in official documents, and thus gave his name to the year. The Alexander cult was important for the dynastic cult in Egypt, as in 272/1 BC Ptolemy II associated himself and his wife Arsinoe II to it as the "Sibling Gods" (P.Hib. II 199, cf. Minas 2000); the priest of Alexander thereafter functioned as the priest of Alexander and the Sibling Gods (*Theoi Adelphoi*). Ptolemy II's successors followed his example by connecting their worship to the worship of Alexander, and in this way the Alexander cult became a dynastic cult of all deceased (and reigning) Ptolemies – except, for unknown reasons, for Ptolemy I and his wife. It was not until Ptolemy IV that these two "Savior Gods" (*Theoi Soteres*), the founders of the dynasty (who were excluded again between 192 and 176 BC), were added to the dynastic cult. In 215/14 BC, a second eponymous cult for Ptolemy I was established in the Upper Egyptian Greek *polis* of Ptolemais Hermeiou, but the priest of this cult was included in the dating formula of Demotic and Greek documents only in Upper Egypt (Clarysse and Van der Veken 1983, pp. 40–52).

Besides their inclusion in the ruler and dynastic cults, most Ptolemaic queens had their own cult – some during their lifetime, others only posthumously. The first – and in terms of cultic worship, most important – was Arsinoe II, who was honored as the "Brother-Loving Goddess" (*Thea Philadelphos*). A Hieroglyphic stele from Mendes reports on her elevation to godhood after her death: statues of her were to be set up in every Egyptian temple, where she was to share the cults of the Egyptian gods (Schäfer 2011, pp. 261–267; for the Mendes stele, see Chapter 34); this was to be financed by taxes on orchards and vineyards (*apomoirā*), per decree of the king. And it was not only the Egyptians who considered the queen a goddess: many Greek cities were founded with the name Arsinoe or Philadelpheia ("city of brotherly love"), showing the Greeks accepted the new dynastic deity (or had to accept her) as a patron city deity. For example, in Arsinoe in Asia Minor, the main temple was the Arsinoeion (SEG XXXIX 1426). The priestess of Arsinoe II in Alexandria was called *kanephoros* ("basket-carrier," translated into Egyptian as "carrier of the gold basket," *f3y tn-nwb*). For Berenice II, a so-called *athlophoros* ("prize-carrier," translated into Egyptian as "carrier of the trophy of victory," *f3y qn-n'š*) was instituted in 211/10 BC, after her death. Arsinoe III similarly received a priestess after her murder in 204 BC. Like the priests of Alexander, the priestesses of the queens changed annually; their names were added in official documents after that of the eponymous priest of Alexander and the dynasty.

Great festivals in Alexandria played an important role in the agency of the divinity of the ruler, with feasts such as the Basileia, Ptolemaia, and Theadelpheia (Perpillou-Thomas 1993, pp. 151–175). The regulations for the cult of Arsinoe II during her feast (maybe the Theadelpheia or Philadelpheia) are found on a papyrus:

let no one walk ... to the *kanephoros* ... of Arsinoe Philadelphos ... [together with] the *prytaneis*, the priests, [the gymnasiarchs], the ephebes and the rod-[bearers. Those who] wish to

sacrifice to Arsinoe [Philadelphos] shall sacrifice in front of their [private doors] or on their [houses] or [on the] road along which the *kanephoros* walks; everyone should sacrifice either a bird [or whatever victim] each wishes. (P.Oxy. XXVII 2465; translation Austin 2006, no. 295; cf. Schorn 2001)

During these special feasts for the queens, libations could be poured with so-called *oinochoai*: special “wine jugs” made of faience that depicted the queens acting in different ritual situations (Thompson 1973; see Figure 34.4).

27.1.2 *Egyptian Ruler and Dynastic Cult*

Perhaps already in the time of Ptolemy II, the Egyptian priests developed their own forms of ruler and dynastic cult by transforming the king into an Egyptian god. At least from the time of Ptolemy III, they met regularly in synods in or near Alexandria or Memphis (Huss 1991). In analogy to Greek *poleis*, they established an Egyptian form of ruler and dynastic cult, announced in Greek-style honorific decrees. They added a Demotic and Hieroglyphic translation of the Greek prototype text (Clarysse 2000). The first example of these priestly resolutions is that for Ptolemy III and Berenice II, dating to 243 BC (El-Masri et al. 2012 with translation). In its resolution formula, it reads (ll. 23–5):

One should establish a statue of king Ptolemy, son of Ptolemy and Arsinoe, the Brother-and-sister gods, and a statue of queen Berenice, his sister and wife, the Benefactor gods, and a shrine should be set up in every temple, and it should be set up in the inner sanctuaries together with the other shrines ... In the times of the great festivals, at which occur the processions of the shrines [of the Egyptian gods], one should also take out the shrine of the Benefactor gods ... Because it happened that the beginning of so much good were the birthday of the king and the day of his coronation, these days have to be celebrated, the fifth and the twenty-fifth, as feasts in every temple of Egypt, as well as the ninth, monthly, when the birthday of queen Berenice, the sister and spouse of Ptolemy, is celebrated.

So, in every Egyptian temple, Ptolemy III and his wife were henceforth “temple-sharing gods” (*synnaoi theoi*). The presence of such royal shrines and statues is also attested in the “Buch vom Tempel” and in Egyptian temple decoration (Quack 2007, p. 219).

Five years later, in 238 BC, the priests issued a second decree, this time in Canopus near Alexandria (Pfeiffer 2004), which accomplished the full deification of the reigning couple. Its central cult regulations were:

and for the priests in each of the temples of the country to be designated also “priests of the Benefactor gods”, ... and whereas feasts of the Benefactor gods are celebrated each month in the temples in accordance with the previously written decree [i.e. that from 243 BC], the fifth (day) and the ninth and the twenty-fifth, and feasts and public festivals are celebrated each year in honor of the other greatest gods, (be it resolved) for there to be held each year a public festival in the temples and throughout the whole country in honor of king Ptolemy and queen Berenice, the Benefactor gods, on the day on which the star of Isis rises, which is reckoned in the sacred writings to be the new year. (OGIS I 56; translation Bagnall and Derow 2004, no. 164)

The decrees of Alexandria and Canopus show that the Egyptian ruler cult treated the Ptolemaic king and his wife as gods – gods who were nevertheless dependent on the immortal Egyptian gods, as the decrees also show (cf. Pfeiffer 2010a). As the Ptolemaic kings were now Egyptian gods in every Egyptian temple, every Egyptian priest was a priest of the king, besides his other offices for the indigenous gods. The ruling couple furthermore had monthly festivals, just like the other Egyptian gods, including all common rituals (sacrifices, libations, and so on). The previously named processions of the new gods were highly important, because they were the only way for laypeople to come in direct contact with them, as their statues were normally closed up in the temples. Interestingly, the priestly regulations prescribe the coronation of the participants of the festivals. This is an un-Egyptian custom directly imported from Greek religion, showing that the Egyptian ruler cult was indeed an invention copied from Greek cult practice and incorporated by the Egyptian priests into their old temple religion.

Nearly identical to the ruler cult regulations for Ptolemy III and Berenice II determined by the Alexandrian and Canopian synods were the regulations issued by the priests in the Rosetta Decree, enacted on the occasion of the coronation of Ptolemy V as pharaoh in his ninth year (Pfeiffer 2010a). In contrast to the step-by-step establishment of ruler cult in years five and eight of the rule of Ptolemy III, Ptolemy V was fully integrated into the Egyptian cults at once, which points to the fact that the decree of 243 BC was the first ever issued.

The special festivals established by the priests for Ptolemy III and V were scheduled at the beginning of the new year (for Ptolemy III, at the astronomical beginning of the new year when the Sothis star rises; for Ptolemy V, at the beginning of the civil new year). These dates were already accepted festival days in Egypt – from then on, the beginning of a new year was closely connected to the ruler as a deity.

To sum up: the inclusion of the reigning ruler into the temple cults and the introduction of the rulers into the Egyptian pantheon were new phenomena in Egyptian religion, unknown in pharaonic times and inspired by Greek cult practices.

The main agents of Egyptian ruler cult are to be found in Memphis, the place where the Alexandrian court and the traditional pharaonic kingship of the old capital met. The priesthood of Ptah in Memphis played a most important part in Ptolemaic ruler cult, since the high priest of Ptah was also the prophet of the king. This is confirmed by the so-called Harris stele, a funerary stele for the high priest of Ptah, Pasherentah III. In the reign of Ptolemy XII, Pasherentah III became priest of the king (*hym-ntr nsw*), in the following way:

I went forth in the residence [of the] Ionian kings which is on the shore of the Great Green ... which is by its name Rhakotis [i.e. Alexandria]. The king of Upper and Lower Egypt ... had appeared solemnly from his palace of life and prosperity, to alight at the temple of Isis, lady of the Mound-of-Egypt ... coming forth in procession around the temple of Isis by his war-chariot. The king himself halted his war-chariot. He arrayed my head for me with the glorious chaplet of gold (and) all the genuine precious stones, the royal effigy being in its midst. I was made his priest. (Stele BM 886; translation Reymond 1981, p. 148)

The priests of Egypt not only transformed the Greek ruler cult into an Egyptian pendant, but also developed a specific form of dynastic cult. As the first Macedonian king was

unimportant for the Egyptian priests, they organized an Egyptian dynastic cult with tight bonds to every Egyptian deity worshiped in the temple. For example, the Canopus decree states:

Be it resolved by the priests of the country: to increase the already existing honors (paid) in the temples to king Ptolemy and queen Berenice, the Benefactor gods, and to their parents the Sibling gods, and to their grandparents the Saviour gods. (OGIS I 56, translation Bagnall and Derow 2004, no. 164)

This dynastic cult is reflected in the so-called “Ahnenreihen” (“rows of ancestors”), the enumeration of the ancestors of a reigning king following his Hieroglyphic titulature. Many Egyptian temple reliefs also depict the ancestors of the reigning couple receiving a sacrifice by their actual heirs (Minas 2000).

The Egyptian form of ruler and dynastic cult was highly attractive for all inhabitants of Egypt – not only the Egyptian ones. There is evidence that non-Egyptians also participated in these forms of cult (e.g. Pfeiffer 2011), which was celebrated until the time of Cleopatra VII.

27.2 The Roman Emperors

When Egypt became a Roman province, the ruler cult experienced many changes, since the *populus Romanus* was now formally the “ruler” of the country. Initially, the Egyptian priests tried to include Octavian (later Augustus), the new *de facto* ruler, into their Ptolemaic conception of ruler cult. In 27 BC, Augustus himself – although he was at that time not in Egypt – allegedly proclaimed Psenamounis to be high priest of Ptah in Memphis:

He made the god’s father, priest <of Ptah> Psenamounis ... priest of Caesar ... He gave him the golden diadem (and) numerous gifts. (Stele BM 184; translation Reymond 1981, p. 230; cf. Herklotz 2007, pp. 292–298)

This passage is reminiscent of the one from the Harris stele quoted earlier; at first glance, nothing seems different – there was an Egyptian cult for the emperor as an Egyptian god, and his most important priest was the high priest of Ptah in Memphis. But shortly after the death of Psenamounis, everything changed. Although the Roman rulers were presented in the temples as typical Egyptian pharaohs like their Macedonian predecessors, performing the rituals in front of the Egyptian gods, no Roman ruler was ever crowned pharaoh, and the Egyptian temples were no longer places of ruler cult. The priests stopped congregating in pan-Egyptian synods, and they didn’t establish the Roman emperor as a god of their temples – at least, there is no certain proof of this (*pace* Dörner 2014). Probably, Augustus and his successors had no interest in anything that resembled the Egyptian and Greek forms of Ptolemaic ruler cult. Regarding the Greek and Egyptian subjects, Augustus (or his administration) focused the legitimacy of Roman rule over Egypt mainly on his presentation as a second Alexander, who liberated Egypt from the

Ptolemies. Greek and Demotic texts describe him as Zeus, the “liberator” (*Eleutherios*) (Herklotz 2007, pp. 117–136). On a statue of Apollo in Alexandria, Augustus is praised as the one who

came (?) rejoicing to the Land of the Nile, heavily laden with the cargo of Lawful Order and Abundance of exceeding wealth inasmuch as he was Zeus *Eleutherios*; Nile welcomed the Lord with arms full of bounty, and his wife (the land of Egypt) bathed in the cubits of the golden flood and received the peaceful and easy rain of Zeus *Eleutherios*. (*Suppl. Hell.* 982; translation Koenen and Thompson 1984, pp. 126–127)

Although the ruler was no longer a priestly approved and promulgated Egyptian god, it was nevertheless possible for every Egyptian subject – as well as every Greek, and even every Roman soldier – to take him for a god, or at least to attribute divine honors to him – and, in fact, the inhabitants of Egypt did just that, in various ways (Pfeiffer 2010b). Furthermore, an official cult for the emperor was installed, but it was a new kind of cult, one centered in imperial temples called *Sebasteia* (from *Sebastos*, the Greek word for Augustus) or *Kaisarcia* (from *Kaisar*, Caesar, the *nomen gentile* of Augustus), mainly in the *metropoleis*, but also in smaller towns (see Figure 27.2). This was a cult of the deified deceased emperors: the living emperor was normally worshiped with offerings to the Egyptian, Greek, and Roman gods for his welfare (hyper/pro salute). Only Augustus was worshiped as a god during his lifetime, although indications for pre-mortem cults of Nero and especially Hadrian are found (Pfeiffer 2010b).



Figure 27.2 Simulated reconstruction (by Jan Köster; see Pfeiffer 2017) of the emperor cult temple in front of the first pylon of the Amun precinct of Karnak.

The cult for the emperors lay in the hands of local members of the city administration called “high priests of the city” or “high priests of the Lords *Augusti* and all the gods” (Drecolll 1997, pp. 104–105). The imperial temples known from archeological, papyrological, and epigraphical evidence were administrative and legal centers (Łukaszewicz 1986). Because of the juridical and administrative importance of ruler cult, the emperor was included into the imperial oath (de Jong 2011, pp. 633–637), which had (like in Ptolemaic times) to be sworn for juridical purposes: “I swear by Caesar Imperator, son of God, Zeus *Eleutherios*, Augustus” (BGU XVI 2591). Mentioning the (god-)emperor gave authority to a legal document. In later times, the oath could also be sworn by his *tyche* (“fortune”).

Augustus’ cult became the role model for imperial cult in Egypt up till the time of Constantine the Great. What we don’t know is whether his successors received their own cults in the imperial temples, or if the cult was celebrated only for the deified Augustus (Pfeiffer 2010a). Furthermore, the organization of imperial cult is still open to debate: was it implemented and organized by the imperial government, or was the initiative taken by local elites? Blumenthal (1913) highlights the second view, which is still maintained by most researchers today (Dunand 1983; Jördens 2014; Dörner 2014). On the other hand, there are at least hints that point to another interpretation of the facts. Rigsby (1985), for example, refers to the supervision of imperial cult by Roman authorities, while de Jong (2011, pp. 625–626) points to orders of prefects to celebrate emperor festivals. Eventually, one might suppose that local initiative and Roman control and guidance intertwined (cf. Pfeiffer 2010b).

One of the most important Roman officials in Egypt was the high priest (*archiereus*). Two issues concerning the high priest of all of Egypt are under debate. The first concerns the date of the office’s institution: was it already installed in the reign of Augustus (e.g. Pfeiffer 2010b; Dörner 2014: Tiberius), or was it introduced under Hadrian (e.g. Jördens 2014)? The second is related to the function of the high priest: was he really a priest (e.g. Pfeiffer 2010b), or had he only an administrative function (e.g. Demougin 2007)?

Rome had at least some influence on the ruler cult, as shown by Claudius’ letter to Alexandria (AD 41). The city had sent an embassy to Rome to notify the emperor of an honorary decree, which assigned several divine honors to the emperor. Claudius’ answer went as follows:

For this reason I have gladly received the honors you have given me, although I have not great taste for such things. Firstly then, I allow you to keep my birthday as an Augustan day as you have requested, and I permit you to erect in their several places the statues of me and my family; for I see that you are anxious to establish on all sides memorials of your reverence to my family ... But the establishment of a high priest and temples of myself I decline, not wishing to be offensive to my contemporaries and in the belief that temples and the like have been set apart in all ages for the gods alone ... It is also my will that the *neokoroi* of the temple of the god Augustus in Alexandria should be chosen by lot in the same way as those of the god Augustus in Canopus. (P.Lond. VI 1912; Sel.Pap. II 212; translation CPJ II 153)

Claudius significantly refuses being honored as a god by the city. Here, we have an extraordinary change of self-perception between the Roman emperor Claudius and the

earlier Hellenistic kings (and Claudius' officially condemned predecessor Caligula and successors Nero and Domitian). Claudius allows special worship to him (such as the erection of statues) but prohibits cult – which should only be contributed to the deified Augustus. As Claudius gives prescriptions for the organization of the cult for Augustus, it is obvious that it was under a certain state control, at least in Alexandria.

In contrast to the Ptolemaic ruler-cult festivals, which were celebrated on highly important days of the Egyptian year, the imperial festivals – the “Augustan days” (*hemeraï sebastai*) – were celebrated according to the Roman cult calendar and – as we have seen in the letter of Claudius – e.g. on the emperor's birthday (Perpillou-Thomas 1993, pp. 164–175).

27.3 Conclusion

The ruler cult for the living king and the imperial cult for the deified Augustus were intended to create a stabilizing bond for the multiethnic and multicultural population of Egypt, with its different deities of various cultural and religious backgrounds. The ruler, or his ancestors, were subjects of a cult that everyone had in common; in this way, the means to create a common identity despite the diversity of creeds was shaped. The title of this chapter is “A Successful Ruler and Imperial Cult,” but what does that mean? If we judge a successful cult by its practice, we cannot say whether the Ptolemaic and Roman cult were successful or not, because we do not know whether the different forms of veneration and worship were practiced by all subjects – or, if they were, whether this was due to true loyalty to the ruler or only in anticipation of the receipt of benefits in kind. What we know for sure is that Egypt had the longest-lasting post-Alexander kingdom and that, as a province of the Roman Empire, it was a reliable deliverer of grain. Was this political stability due to the ruler and imperial cult, which provided a framework that consolidated loyalty, or rather to the strong military power of the Ptolemies and the Roman emperors? There are some hints that not all subjects were content with the *pax Ptolemaica* or *pax Romana*. While indigenous rebellions are attested in times of political instability under the Ptolemies, in Roman Egypt opposition is expressed by the so-called acts of the Alexandrian martyrs (*Acta Alexandrinorum*; Harker 2008).

FURTHER READING

A comprehensive overview of Hellenistic ruler cult is found in Chaniotis (2003). On ruler cult in Greco-Roman Egypt, one should consult Dunand (1983); on Ptolemaic ruler cult in particular, Hauben (1989) or Pfeiffer (2008b). Winter (1978) provides an important study on Egyptian ruler cult, while Heinen (1995) offers a fine article on the beginnings of Roman imperial cult. Finally, Pfeiffer (2012) and de Jong (2011) provide an overview of the emperor cult up to the third century AD.

CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

New Deities and New Habits

Franziska Naether

28.1 New Deities, New Identities, New Looks

New Kingdom Egyptologists commonly speak of an “International Age,” since the pharaonic rulers now had to deal with tribes and empires in the Mediterranean and the Near East (Van De Microop 2011, pp. 154–155). This might be even truer for the Greco-Roman Period and Late Antiquity, with Egypt being ruled by the Ptolemies, monarchs of Macedonian ancestry, and emperors residing no longer on the Nile but on the Tiber or at the Bosphorus. Therefore, evidence for religion – including the Egyptian pantheon – is not only multimedial and multilingual, but also comes from regions outside of Egypt.

An innovation of the Ptolemaic Period is the god Sarapis. He was introduced into the pantheon by order of King Ptolemy I Soter in the third century BC. Sarapis is usually depicted in human form, with a voluminous beard and hair topped by a flat cylindrical crown, which could be decorated with ornaments and divine symbols (*kalathos*). Scholars basically agree that Sarapis as god of abundance and afterlife was created in order to unify Greek and Egyptian trains of belief (Kessler 2000, pp. 163–192; but see Devauchelle 2010, pp. 53–54 against a distinction of “Osiris-Apis” and “Apis-Osiris” for the roots of Sarapis, as favored by Kessler). He does not appear in zoomorphic form as do many other Egyptian gods (except for Osiris), but wears Greek garments. In the Egyptian pantheon, Sarapis was equated with Osiris and took up several of his functions, such as the regenerative and funerary aspect. He also replaced him as husband of Isis and father of the (child god) Horus (Harpokrates), forming a new triad. Several of his temples, called Sarapiclia, were to be found in Egypt, according to Pausanias (1.18.4) – the most famous in Alexandria, the oldest at Memphis.

Sarapis cults are widely attested in the Roman Empire. In the long term, the introduction of this new god was a huge success. Mobile groups in Egypt and the Eastern Mediterranean helped spread the cults of Sarapis, Isis, and Harpokrates, so that from the fourth century onward they were equaled only by Christianity in terms of pervasiveness (Merkelbach 1995; Bommas 2005, 2012; Hoffmann 2005). Several Roman emperors, such as Marcus Aurelius and Septimius Severus, appeared in their public portraits and sculptures as Sarapis (Säflund 1968), or assumed the title Philosarapis, “Loving Sarapis” (e.g. Caracalla).

One of the main disseminators of cults was the Roman army (Haensch 2010, pp. 122–129). Soldiers stationed in Egypt often adopted local cults and brought them to their families or to new posts elsewhere in the empire. They expressed their beliefs in inscriptions (*proskynemata*) and pious letter formulae. Several Roman garrisons (e.g. Didymoi on the Red Sea, or the camp incorporating the Luxor temple) had their own little sanctuaries (Cuvigny 2011). Some of the classical Egyptian gods, such as Horus and Anubis, are depicted wearing Roman armor, as in the necropolis of Kom el-Shuqafa in Alexandria (Empereur 1995).

Some divinities were worshiped in their main cult centers as creator gods. Isis, for instance, was not only the goddess of magic and healing, but became also the main female deity in her aretologies (e.g. P.Oxy. XI 1380; see Müller 1961). Her iconography of suckling the child god Horus (“Isis lactans”) was the forerunner of “Maria lactans,” presenting the god’s mother (“theotokos”) with Baby Jesus on her lap, breastfeeding (Giamberardini 1969; Higgins 2012). Isis’ cult was combined with that of the Ptolemaic queen, most prominently in the time of Cleopatra VII, who styled herself the “New Isis” (Suetonius, *Divus Augustus* 17.5; Brenk 1992). One of Isis’ epithets is the “myriad-named one” (*myrionymos*; “of uncountable names”), surrounding her with magic and mystery. However, Isis had been associated with magic and with different appearances before (Krauss 1980, pp. 191–193). The development of the Egyptian worship of Isis as a mystery cult was an un-Egyptian movement, a creation of other provinces (for the dispersion of Isis’ cult around the Mediterranean and in Europe, see Bommas 2005; Bricault 2008; Bricault and Versluys 2010; Bricault and Veymiers 2011; Nagel 2018).

The crocodile god Sobek/Suchos was another deity who gained the status of a creator god. In the Greco-Roman Period, he was mainly worshiped in the Fayum oasis, where the *metropolis* Krokodilopolis was named after him. Most villages of this newly developed area sported a temple of Sobek in one of his various forms (e.g. Soknebtynis, “Suchos, lord of Tynis”), where he was worshiped together with one of his consorts, such as Isis Nepherses or Isis Nephremmis (Rübsam 1974; Kockelmann 2008). Even a cult of the twin crocodiles Petesouchos and Pnephros, styled after the classical twins Castor and Pollux, is attested (in Karanis, see Dolzani 1961; Frankfurter 1998, pp. 159–160). According to the cult topographical treatise “The Book of the Fayum” (Beinlich 1991; Tait 2003), Sobek was creator of the world. This adds a new theology to those existing in other regions of Egypt, such as the “Memphite theology,” which puts Ptah of Memphis in the central position (el-Hawary 2010).

All these theologies of creation existed in parallel in Egypt, with the local divinity always acting as creator god. Thus, the ibis- or baboon-headed Thoth, the Egyptian god of science

and writing, gained creative power in his main sanctuary in Hermopolis Magna (El-Ashmunein, with its necropolis Tuna el-Gebel). Equated with Hermes, he was worshiped as “trice greatest” (*trismegistos*; Quaegebeur 1986; Fowden 1986) and was instigator of the Corpus Hermeticum, a body of scriptures belonging to the Roman and Late Antique religion of Hermeti(ci)sm and to the philosophical gnostic movement in the same period.

Another phenomenon of Greco-Roman religion is the worship of child divinities. As already mentioned, the main character among these juvenile gods is Horus, son of Isis. In Egyptian literature and mythology, he was a child or young boy, especially while competing with his uncle Seth for the throne of Egypt. He is also addressed as patient in medical and magical spells, replacing the real patient to be cured. In these *historiolae* (mythological precedents for the healing of specific illnesses), his mother Isis regularly cures the divine child, as should be done to the sick. This practice is attested even after Egypt’s Christianization (Frankfurter 2009). Child divinities such as Harpokrates have been discussed extensively in research on their manifold appearances in texts, on temple walls, and in works of art such as the popular terracotta figurines. They appear in boats, in the body of the celestial goddess Nut, on top of the lotus flower, and so forth (Budde et al. 2003; Sandri 2006; Budde 2011). From the Third Intermediate Period onward, the Horus child was often depicted standing on one or two crocodiles, holding snakes, scorpions, and other dangerous creatures in his hands. To these small stone “Horus stelae,” magical spells were added to protect people from threats such as snake bites or demons. The sick person was also supposed to be cured by water that ran down the stele (Ritner 1989).

Tutu (Kaper 2003a) and Bes, two male divinities who became more popular in the Greco-Roman Period, also acted as protectors, the latter especially of children and women. However, their form changed in this new period into that of a hybrid creature, incorporating features of the sphinx, lion, human, hawk, crocodile, and other birds (Figure 28.1). The new, dwarf-like Bes is called Bes Pantheos, “Pantheistic Bes” (Hornung 2000). A rather abstract force added to the Egyptian pantheon was Agathos Daimon (who was equated with Shai/Psais; see Quaegebeur 1975). A creature often appearing on magical gems and in spells with a cock’s head and snake’s feet is named Abraxas or Abrasax (Michel 2004).

Deified humans were increasingly worshiped in the Greco-Roman Period. Some of them had died prematurely (e.g. by drowning in the Nile: the Egyptian word for “saint” (*hsy*, *hasies*, or *hesies* in Greek) means either “praised one” or “drowned one”). In the reign of Augustus, several small temples for such people were erected in Lower Nubia, such as the temple of Mandulis in Kalabsha (von Lieven 2010). Humans had already been deified in pharaonic times. The architect and scholar Imhotep or Imuthes, for instance, was adored continuously from the Old Kingdom onward, and was in Greco-Roman times equated with Asklepios. In Hatshepsut’s temple at Deir el-Bahari, a chapel for incubation under his aegis (and that of Amenotes) was added to the New Kingdom structure by Ptolemy VIII (Renberg 2017). P.Oxy. XI 1381, the back side of the previously mentioned Isis text, narrates how Imhotep emerges in dreams (Naether and Thissen 2012). A special case is the close companion of Emperor Hadrian, Antinoos. After his death by drowning in the Nile, Hadrian founded the town of Antinoopolis (El-Sheikh Ibada) to commemorate the young man, who also became a saint and answered people’s pleas in their dreams (Renberg 2010a).



Figure 28.1 The sphinx god Tutu, his mother Neith/Athena, and the griffin of Petbe/Nemesis. Limestone. Source: Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, Egyptian and Near Eastern Collection Inv-N° AEOS 5077. © Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien.

The new and continued developments in cults are reflected in onomastics. Personal names composed with “Sarapis” and “Dionysus,” for example, became popular. However, the attestations tend to surprise us now that we have larger sets of evidence in our databases (e.g. www.trismegistos.org), encouraging further investigation (Clarysse and Paganini 2009; Clarysse 2013b).

28.2 New Habits

During the Greco-Roman Period, several ritual, divinatory, and magical practices allowed petitioners to cope with problems and hardships in their life, by letting them know what had happened in the past, revealing what the future might bring, or providing a divine revelation of aid in reaching a decision. Such practices included questioning oracles, having revelatory dreams, and magical methods of epiphany (*ph-ntr*, Ritner 1993). The gods were listening, and they answered the pleas of the common people through a priestly intermediate at the local temple (Clarysse 2009a, p. 568). Several of these practices were continued into the Christian period.

Predicting the future or enlightening the past is, however, not innovative in the time span of this Companion (Frankfurter 2012, pp. 324–333). Many ritual, divinatory, and magical techniques are attested in earlier periods of Egyptian history. Recent discoveries suggest that there were many more long-term traditions than those described here and that Egypt’s divinatory landscape was always larger – and its local temple libraries contained more sacred books and ritual manuscripts – than has ever been suspected.

“Ex-eventu”-prophecy, “foretelling after the event,” is a well-known genre; older examples include the work connected with “Ipuwer,” describing Egypt in a state of chaos. In the Greco-Roman Period, the “Oracle of the Potter” (Koenen 1968) and the “Lamb of Bocchoris” (Thissen 2002) are treatises worth mentioning. Prophecy through a lamb is also mentioned in the world chronicle preserved on a papyrus from Leipzig (Popko and Rücker 2011). A further example is the cryptic “Demotic Oracle” or “Demotic Chronicle” (Felber 2002).

A convenient way to ask the gods for help was to hand in an *oracle question*. The inquiry was submitted on a written papyrus “ticket” in an affirmative and a negative version: “Would it be good to...”/“Would it not be good to...” Priests helped formulate the question and interpreted the divine answer. The petitioner was not present during the process of decision-making, but got back the “ticket” picked by the god in answer. This divinatory method was widespread in Greco-Roman and Late Antique Egypt, but has predecessors in the New Kingdom (rather short texts on ostraca) and in the Third Intermediate Period (Naether 2010, pp. 359–410). According to the papyrological evidence, it seems that the “ticket” oracle largely replaced the earlier oracle of the processional bark, in which questions were laid down on the route of a festival procession and the god, carried around on a portable shrine, answered them by moving forward and backward over them (Coulon 2001).

Apart from these rather free-formulated questions, people could consult *oracle books*, which contained a catalogue of questions covering a wide range of daily and professional topics: love, health, travel, business, property, and juristic matters. Commonly, a mix of calculation, hemerology, prayer, purification, and sortition was used by the priest to present the petitioner with a fitting answer. A book of this genre with a long tradition is the “Homer Oracle” (*homeromanteion*), attested by several papyri. After rolling the dice, the client obtained an answer from selected verses of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* (Naether 2010, pp. 330–331). The best-preserved Greek oracle book is the Sortes (“Lots”) of the fictitious magician Astrampsychus (Naether 2010), which was popular in later Roman times and was still in use in the Middle Ages. It contains three parts:

1. A list of 91 questions, numbered from 12 to 102, including:

12 Will I sail safely?
 19 Will I be successful?
 21 Will I marry and will it be to my advantage?
 52 Will I inherit from my wife?
 88 Will I be a senator?
 91 Have I been poisoned?

2. A concordance table, with at the left side a number between 13 and 112, at the right a random number between 1 and 100, and in the middle the name of the deity who should answer the question (Zeus, Hera, Apollo, Adonis, the Sirens, the Dead, Ephialtes, etc.).
3. A list of 1000 answers, 10 for each question plus 90 extras, in a non-transparent order, such as:

If you sail soon, you’ll be in danger.
 Your wife won’t stay with you. Marry someone else.

With effort the baby will survive.
 You'll have an average lifespan. Don't be upset. Pray instead.
 You'll be a teacher in a foreign country and become rich.
 You'll have an inheritance, but not all of it.
 You haven't been poisoned, but you have been bewitched.

(translations Stewart and Morrell 1998)

As parents were interested in the health and future of their infants, personal names often came from oracles (e.g. Peteesis, "Isis has given him"), and at the time of birth, the constellation of celestial bodies was recorded in view of *horoscopes* and birth notes. Unlike modern newspaper horoscopes, containing exchangeable phrases arranged by computer, ancient horoscopes provided only data on stars and planets. The interpretation was given orally (except e.g. P.Oxy. IV 804). Astronomy and astrology were highly developed sciences in Roman Egypt (Baccani 1992; Ross 2006; see Chapter 32).

In cases of severe injustice – from the perspective of the victims – people could write a *letter to a god*. These texts often tell pitiful stories, and must have been the last resort of the petitioner (Endreffy 2010). The salutations at the beginning and the end display pious wishes for the well-being of the addressee and his or her offspring, which resemble the formulations in the previously mentioned "ticket" oracles (Depauw 2006). Even in the world of justice, methods of divination and sortition in order to gain a divine ordeal were embedded into law (Naether 2018).

For the observation and interpretation of omina, catalogues were composed (Quack 2006). A good example is the *dream books*, list-like accounts explaining visions seen in dreams (Prada 2011). Although their interpretation – as with the majority of divinatory techniques – was institutionalized at the temple, a small stele of a Cretan dream interpreter with a Greek inscription has been found, to the surprise of many scholars. On a small advert that probably stood close to his venue in Saqqara, he offers his services. However, such a freelance mantic specialist must have been an exception in Egypt (Wildung and Grimm 1978, no. 106).

A special group of servants "detained" in the temple were the *katochoi*. These were possessed by the god, who sent them prophetic dreams, which they copied down. This lifestyle might encompass a form of temple asylum. The pastophorus-priest Hor, for example, was connected to the shrine of the Syrian goddess Astarte (Renberg 2010b) (for the *katochos* archive of the Memphite Serapeum and the archive of Hor, see Chapter 30).

A perhaps stronger means of binding oneself to a sanctuary was the practice of *hieroduleia* ("temple-slavery") or self-dedication, as known from Greek and Demotic contracts. In these documents, a person donated him- or herself with all his or her belongings to the god, including all his or her future income (Scholl 1985; Thissen in Daniel et al. 1986, pp. 86–87). A similar practice is found in the child-donation contracts of parents handing over their children to a church or monastery. It has been speculated that the children might have had a disability of some sort with which mother and father were unable to cope (Richter 2005).

Further types of *omina* included sudden movements, sounds, and other phenomena. These were considered to be sent by the gods, often through their sacred animals, kept in temple domains. Falcons, baboons, crocodiles, and so forth were seen as divine manifestations of the god and inspired by his or her possession. Beside accounts of such omia and

documents on the breeding of sacred animals (more popular than ever in the Greco-Roman Period; see Ikram 2005), we are also well informed on the subject of their burial rituals. An important cult was centered on sacred bulls, such as Buchis, Mnevis, and Apis (Vos 1993). Their funeral was usually celebrated in the presence of the sovereign.

A funerary practice continued over the centuries was the production of religious and magical texts called “Books of the Dead.” A selection of spells, sometimes illustrated with colorful vignettes, protected the deceased from the dangers of the Netherworld. “Books of the Dead” were partly replaced by “Books of Breathing” in the Ptolemaic Period, stressing the importance of breath for the deceased; both are attested until the later Roman Imperial Period (Töpfer and Müller-Roth 2011; Stadler 2012a, pp. 389–392).

Fascinating *magical practices* include spells to make people fall in love, to weaken an opponent, to heal diseases, and to win at games (Ritner 1993). The largest compilation attested in Egypt is the so-called “Theban Magical Library,” found in the tomb of a priest. The papyrus sheets or rolls referred to as the “Papyri Graecae et Demoticae Magicae” (Greek (PMG or Pap.Graec.Mag) and Demotic (PDM) Magical Papyri) are multilingual and multicultural in nature (Betz 1992; Dieleman 2012) (Figure 28.2). Ma’at, the Egyptian system of a divinized world order, justice, and ethics, was paralleled with Heka, a creative force of magic (for the nature of this cosmotheistic religion, see Assmann 1991). The recipes of the medical and magical papyri show a strong fear of demons, which might harm people and unborn children (Lucarelli 2011). Amulets (Herrmann et al. 2010) and

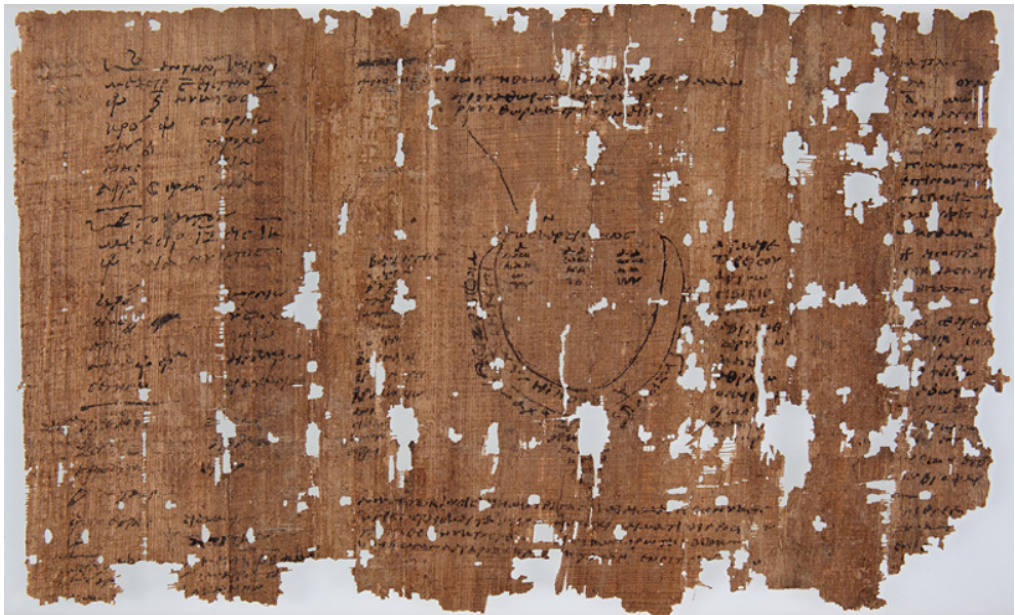


Figure 28.2 The Leiden magical papyrus. The verso has four horoscopes, an incantation against a woman, and a magic figure representing a heart. Source: courtesy Leiden, Papyrological Institute P.Warren 21, verso, cf. Pap.Lugd.Bat. I 21 verso; Betz (1992), p. 294. © Leids Papyrologisch Instituut.

(to a lesser degree in Egypt) gems were carried by the living and the dead as protection against these evil forces (Michel 2004).

As already mentioned, rituals, divination, and magic in ancient Egypt were housed at the temples, whether major cult places or small sanctuaries in villages. Unfortunately, we are informed only partly about their internal organization. Priestly titles often do not reveal their actual duties. Besides some full-time priests, there were only floating personnel, organized in four or five “tribes” (*phylai*), who worked part-time at the temple (see Chapter 26). Although a large part of the population was integrated into the cult, only rarely do we catch sight of religious professionals working outside the temples. The “Book of the Temple” may shed more light on this issue (Quack 2002a). One treatise containing initiation rituals for priests is known as the “Book of Thoth” (Jasnow and Zauzich 2005).

With the spread of Christianity in Egypt, a remarkable shift in religious practices can be observed: when villages converted nearly completely to the new belief, and some temples became churches, cult practices were no longer bound to a particular place, but became attached to a more mobile subject or object, such as a hermit or a holy book. Egypt was the birthplace of monastic life, which was to flourish under the leadership of people like Shenoute, the archimandrite who organized the Red and White Monasteries near Achmim (ancient Panopolis) (see Chapter 29). Magical spells, lot oracles, and questions to divinities were adapted to Christian traditions. Monasteries continued some pagan cult practices, and pagan congregations still existed next to Christian, Jewish, and other religious movements, especially in the major cities – including, of course, Alexandria (Frankfurter 2005b). Even after the Arab conquest in the seventh century, these ritual practices were preserved, or else exchanged with the rich divinatory culture of the old Islamic world.

28.3 Conclusion

The rise of new phenomena is often accompanied by criticism. Although divinatory and magical practices had their origin in earlier phases of Egyptian history and continued through the Greco-Roman Period and well into the Middle Ages, they did not go unquestioned. Roman emperors in particular, who often had soothsayers for their own divinatory needs, reacted with imperial edicts and laws against Egyptian magic (Naether 2010, pp. 411–426). As one of the richest provinces in the Roman Empire, Egypt – with its “strange” rituals and wise priests – was kept under a watchful eye. Additionally, some rulers were afraid of inquiries by “ticket” oracles about how long they would continue to live. While some methods of divination were punished by capital sentence if detected, the papyrological evidence hardly reflects this (except SB XIV 12144, an edict of the prefect forbidding oracle consultation during Septimius Severus’ visit).

The Homer Oracle, the Sortes Astrampsychi, lot oracles with Bible verses or Quranic sura – such practices had a long tradition. In Christian times, people ceased to implore Isis, Sarapis, and Horus for help, and turned instead to God, Christ, and saints such as St. Kollouthos and St. Philoxenos. With the Arab tradition, new cultic practices were added to the divinatory portfolio (e.g. in astronomy and sortition).

FURTHER READING

As an introduction to the religion of the Roman Period in general, see Frankfurter (1998). For many of the cult practices discussed here, see Stadler (2012a). Renberg (2017) provides an overview of dreams, Naether (2010) of oracles, Ritner (1993) of magic, and Herrmann et al. (2010) of religious amulets and figures.

CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE

Egypt's Role in the Rise of Christianity, Monasticism, and Regional Schisms

Malcolm Choat

29.1 The Earliest Christian Presence

Christianity's assertive early missionizing cannot have failed to bring the gospel to Alexandria, a mere week's road travel from Jerusalem. Yet, unlike for many major Mediterranean cities, no contemporary record of this exists. A possible indication that this happened before the mid-50s AD is found in the report in Acts 18:24–19.1 of the activities in Ephesus of the Alexandrian Jew Apollos, who displayed eloquence and scriptural erudition, coupled with an understanding of the “way of God” that required correction (Wehnert 2013). While his theology (insofar as it can be recovered at all) is not incompatible with a background in the Hellenistic milieu of Alexandria, it is perfectly possible that his first encounter with the message of Jesus took place at some intermediate point between Alexandria and Ephesus (Wehnert 2013, pp. 404–412). Even if Apollos had been “instructed in the way of the Lord *in his homeland*” (ἐν τῇ πατρίδι, as the reading of Acts 18:25 in the fifth-century Codex Bezae asserts), the episode provides no direct testimony for an apostolic mission to Alexandria. Jews from Egypt who heard the words of the apostles in Jerusalem (e.g. Acts 2:10; 6:9) may have taken the message back to the large Jewish community in Alexandria. If these were not the precise historical circumstances, it is nevertheless likely that this is the route by which Christianity reached Egypt.

In place of contemporary records of a Christian presence in first-century Alexandria, what survive are the ways in which later generations remembered the origins of Christianity in Egypt. Foremost among these is the tradition that the evangelist Mark first brought the

gospel to Alexandria. These narratives, which suggest close contacts with both Rome and Jerusalem in the earliest period, must be understood principally in the context of the time in which they emerge, and will be examined later in this chapter.

We first see the Christian community of Alexandria reflected in works – most now largely lost, and some known only by report – composed in that city (Pearson 2004, pp. 43–81). Texts such as the *Kerygma Petri* (c. AD 110–120; Jakab 2001, pp. 55–56) and the *Epistle of Barnabas* (most probably written in late first- or early second-century Alexandria, Paget 1994, pp. 30–42) show engagement with the Jewish traditions from which they arose, even while differentiating these old ways from the nascent Christian community.

Such differentiations cannot obscure the evident conduit from the Hellenized Jewish community of Philo in Julio-Claudian Alexandria to the Christian community of the Antonine city. This is best explained by the growth of the Christian presence within Alexandria's Jewish community, beyond which it expanded – and from which it separated itself – after the second decade of the second century (Jakab 2001, pp. 53–55). This presumably gathered pace after the Jewish revolts in Cyrenaica and Egypt under Trajan in AD 115–117, and the consequent violent decimation of Egypt's Jewish community (Capponi 2010b, pp. 121–123). Yet, the fact that imperial governors were interrogating and even executing people for bearing the name “Christian” elsewhere in the empire (Pliny, *Epistulae* 10.96–97) means it is likely that Christians remained reserved in their public presence.

Their low profile notwithstanding, Christian engagement with elite intellectual culture in Alexandria is clear by the mid-second century. The sidelining of the second-century “Gnostics” Basilides and Valentinus as unorthodox and peripheral has much to do with ancient heresiological tradition, but may also be attributed to a reaction to Bauer's construction of early Alexandrian Christianity as not simply dominated by dualist and demiurgical theology, but actively opposed to the “ecclesiastically structured” tradition that came to dominate the Christian world (Bauer 1971, p. 48; cf. Roberts 1979, pp. 49–73). If Bauer's argument is overdrawn, we must still recognize in Basilides and Valentinus important and innovative Christian philosophers, whose activity fits well with what we know of the milieu in which Christianity developed in Alexandria.

Basilides, “from whom the Gnostics,” preached in Alexandria in the reigns of Hadrian and Antoninus Pius (Eusebius, *Chronicon*, ed. Helm, 201, 1–2, *ad* AD 132; Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses* 1.24.2; Clement, *Stromateis* 7.17.4). If third- and fourth-century heresiological traditions that suggested Basilides traveled through the Delta and studied in the Egyptian *chora* (Epiphanius, *Panarion* 24.1, cf. 23.1.2; Hippolytus, *Refutatio omnium haeresium* 7.27.13) are more dubious, the location of Basilides and his school in Antonine Alexandria is secure (Pearson 2005; Löhr 2013). Valentinus was known to near-contemporaries largely because of his time in Rome, from the late 130s or 140s on (Markschies 1992, pp. 294–311). While his theology is better understood (Dunderberg 2005), the biographical detail on his origin in Egypt is not provided until Epiphanius of Salamis in the fourth century, who is himself suspicious of the traditions he reports (*Panarion* 31.2.3; Markschies 1992, pp. 311–334). That Valentinus “preached in Egypt” (Epiphanius, *Panarion* 31.7.1) may be doubted, but that his “seed” still existed in Epiphanius' day in communities as far south as the Thebaid is confirmed by the survival of a number of

treatises reflecting Valentinian theology, in Coptic translation, among the Nag Hammadi codices, including the “Gospel of Truth,” commonly – although not universally – ascribed to Valentinus himself (Dunderberg 2005, pp. 84–85; Pearson 2006, p. 346).

The teachings of the “Gnostics” already show engagement with the Alexandrian philosophical milieu and traditions from outside Egypt. Both become clearer in what is known of the career of Pantaeus, a “philosopher of the Stoic Sect” (Jerome, *De viris illustribus* 36), active in Alexandria under Commodus (AD 180–192). His works are lost except for two quotations (Osborn 1991), and his meager biographical details are dominated by a record of a trip to India (Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica* (*HE* from now on) 5.10.2–3) and the claim that he was head of the “school of sacred learning” at Alexandria (Eusebius, *HE* 5.10.1, 4). Rather than an institution operating under the aegis of the Church (as existed in Eusebius’ day), the “school” of Pantaeus is better understood as a private establishment where Christian theology and philosophy were expounded (Jakab 2001, pp. 91–106; Scholten 1995; van den Hoek 1997).

If Titus Flavius Clemens (“Clement of Alexandria,” c. 150–215) did not “succeed” Pantaeus as head of the catechetical school (so Eusebius, *HE* 6.6.1), he was nevertheless his student, and carried forward his legacy. Born c. 150, probably in Athens, Clement came to Alexandria sometime in the decade after 180, chasing the “Sicilian bee,” widely presumed to have been Pantaeus (Clement, *Stromateis* 1.11; cf. Eusebius, *HE* 5.11.1–3). Clement remained in Alexandria teaching and writing for nearly 20 years. His three major works, the *Protreptikos* (“Exhortations”), *Paedagogus* (“Instructor”), and *Stromateis* (“Miscellanies”), chart a course from an appeal to educated Hellenes to hear the gospel, through the instruction of those who have heard the word, to the collection of the Greek and Christian wisdom he has assembled. This latter is found in the *Stromateis*, the most advanced (and least assignable in its genre) of his works (Osborn 2005; Hägg 2006).

Clement’s works form our best source for the intellectual and social history of early Alexandrian Christianity. Yet, they focus primarily on the community around him, rather than the ecclesiastical organization. While Clement mentions the Christian hierarchy of bishops, presbyters, and deacons, it is often without specific reference to the local situation (e.g. *Stromateis* 6.106–107; *Paed.* III.12; see Jakab 2001, pp. 179–188). When he does deal with pastoral activities, he neglects to refer to the bishop (*Stromateis* 7.3.2–4). For Clement, discussion of the Church hierarchy is of less concern than the defence of the “original and most true *ekklesia*” from the assemblies of the heretics (van den Hoek 1997, pp. 71–79, esp. 71).

29.2 The Alexandrian Church Under the Episcopate of Demetrius

Various sources attest to a persecution of Christians under Septimius Severus, although only the historically suspect *Historia Augusta* asserts that the emperor issued an edict against them, and the chronology is unclear (*Septimius Severus* 17.1; see also Eusebius, *HE* 6.1, 6.2.2–3; Barnes 1968, pp. 40–41). In later centuries, a Coptic hagiographer produced a

short text that recorded Severus' actions against Christians in Alexandria (Alcock 1982; Schenke 1991, p. 87); the details cannot be substantiated, and where not manifestly erroneous, sound in part like memories of the persecution under Decius (see later).

Clement, whose departure from Alexandria in the early third century may perhaps be associated with this persecution (Eusebius, *HE* 6.3.1), seems to have died early in the second decade of that century (Eusebius, *HE* 6.11.6, 6.14.9; Hägg 2006, p. 52). The last decade of his time in the Egyptian capital coincides with the beginning of the episcopate of Demetrius (189–c. 232), during whose tenure as bishop we are first provided with contemporary evidence (if quoted in later sources) on the organization and hierarchy of the Alexandrian Church (see Table 29.1).

Two important later sources provide information on this period. Eusebius transmits information passed to him via the Caesarean presbyter and martyr Pamphilus, with whom he co-authored a (mostly lost) defense of Origen. Fragments of these writings are also preserved in later authors such as Photius. Much of the material relates to Demetrius' increasingly fractious relationship with Origen, and was originally composed to rehabilitate and defend the great theologian (Wallraff 2006, p. 54). The second important source may be seen in the names (and, less reliably, the dates) Eusebius gives for the leaders of the Alexandrian Christian community down to Demetrius (*HE* 2.24, 3.14, 3.21, 4.1, 4.4, 4.5, 4.11, 4.19, 5.9; Jakab 2001, pp. 176–177; Pearson 2004, pp. 19–20). Eusebius nowhere names his source, but he plainly did not invent them. Rather than this being “a mere echo and a puff of smoke” (Bauer 1971, p. 45), Eusebius seems to have accessed Alexandrian historiographical traditions, most probably via Julius Africanus, a Christian chronographer who visited Alexandria during the episcopate of Demetrius' successor Heraclas (Bishop of Alexandria c. 232–247; see *HE* 6.31.2; Wallraff 2006, pp. 53–56; Wipszycka 2015, p. 59). If what Eusebius drew on was ultimately a product of the institutional memory of the Alexandrian Christian community, it provides an insight into how the Egyptian Church framed its own history, as well as its historical relationship with other Christian communities in the third century.

The most significant piece of information that Eusebius drew from his source on the history of the Church in Egypt was a tradition about the first mission to the province. In Eusebius, this forms part of a discussion in which he narrates the coming of Peter to Rome and the writing of Mark's gospel there (*HE* 2.14–2.15.1), and then cites Clement of Alexandria and Papias on Peter's approval of the work (*HE* 2.15.2). He continues:

Now they say (φασίν) this Mark was the first sent to Egypt, to preach the Gospel which he had written, and the first to establish churches in Alexandria itself. And so large was the crowd of believers, both men and women, that was formed there and then at the first attempt, with the most philosophical and fervent asceticism, that Philo thought it fit to write of their pursuits, meetings, symposia, and all the rest about their way of life. (*HE* 2.16.1)

Elsewhere, Eusebius dates this mission (somewhat implausibly) to AD 41 or 43 (*Chronicon*, ed. Helm, 179.12–13; ed. Karst, 214), and notes that Peter appointed Mark as “teacher and fisherman of those in Egypt” (*Theophany*, ed. Gressmann, 20.9–19). *Phasin* (“they say”) can indicate both oral and written sources in Eusebius (Carriker 2003, p. 28, n.99; Davis 2004, p. 7; Lee 1975, pp. 425–427), and in *HE* 2.15.2 the two

Table 29.1 An expanding Egyptian Church.

<i>Bishops of Alexandria (a selection)</i>	<i>Date (AD)</i>	<i>Number of bishops in the Egyptian chora and Libya</i>	<i>Detailed information</i>
Demetrius, 12th patriarch	189–232	3–10	e.g. Ptolemais in the Thebaid
Various sources attest to a persecution of Christians under <i>Septimius Severus</i>			
Heracclas, 13th patriarch Title of <i>papas</i> or pope is introduced	232–248	20	
<i>Decian persecution 250</i>			See the Decian <i>libelli</i> -archive (TM Arch 331)
Dionysius, 16th patriarch	248–264	Unknown	e.g. Hermopolis, Libya
<i>Valerian persecution c. 257–260</i>			See P.Oxy. XLIII 3119
Maximus, 15th patriarch	265–282	29	e.g. Upper Egypt, Delta, Libya See the archive of letters from and to Sotas, Bishop of Oxyrhynchos (Luijendijk 2008, pp. 81–151)
Theonas, 16th patriarch	282–300	50	In all major cities, 42 different sees
<i>Great persecution 303–313</i>			See P.Oxy. XXXI 2601, P.Oxy. XXXIII 2673
Peter I, 17th patriarch	300–311	55	Now including bishops in Latopolis and the Great Oasis (Kharga)
First free-standing church in Alexandria	312–328	c. 73	Including 49 sees recorded at the Council of Nicaea and ones known later but likely to have been founded by this time
Alexander			Including Mareotis, Syene, and Philae
Athanasius I	328–373 (with five exiles)	c. 81	
Theophilus, 23rd patriarch Destruction of Serapeum in Alexandria, replaced by a church	385–412	c. 87+	98 sees known from before the mid-fifth century
<i>Council of Chalcedon 451</i>			
Two patriarchs (pro- and anti- Chalcedonian) from now onward			

instances of *phasin* clearly refer to the written testimony of Clement and Papias. Indeed, it has been argued that the verb in 2.16.1 also refers back to these writers – or at least to Clement – and that Clement’s *Hypotyposes* (the named source for a slightly contradictory version of the origin of Mark’s gospel in *HE* 6.14.6–7) is where Eusebius found this narrative (Brown 2005, pp. 59–60).

The reference to Clement here is important because the sole witness to the evangelization of Egypt by Mark prior to Eusebius is the letter of Clement to Theodore concerning the “Secret Gospel of Mark” published by M. Smith, the authenticity of which remains in dispute (see most recently Burke 2013). That “more spiritual” versions of the gospels were read to “those who were being initiated into the great mysteries” (*Letter to Theodore*, 1.21–22, 2.1–2) accords well with what we know of second-century Alexandria, whether or not one of them was another version of Mark’s Gospel. It is notable, however, that the information in the *Letter to Theodore* conflicts at several points with the tradition recorded by Eusebius (Davis 2004, pp. 8–9): Mark is not sent by Peter in the early 40s AD, but arrives much later, after the latter’s martyrdom (usually dated to 64), and rather than being the first to evangelize Alexandria, he seemingly finds Christians already in the city (Pearson 1986, p. 138; Piovanelli 2013, pp. 162–163); it is thus in many ways a more realistic tradition. While it is not impossible that Clement recorded contradictory traditions about Mark in the *Hypotyposes* and the *Letter to Theodore*, it seems more likely that the *Hypotyposes* was not in fact Eusebius’ source in *HE* 2.16.1. If it remains possible that the *Letter to Theodore* is a modern forgery, it is nonetheless highly probable that there were divergent traditions about the foundation of Christianity in Alexandria circulating in the late second century: another, which surfaces later in Pseudo-Clementine homilies, has “Clement” meet Barnabas spreading the word of God in Alexandria (*Clementine Homilies* 1.8–11, 13–14; Quispel 2008, pp. 541–542; Paget 1994, p. 36). One of these traditions was then sanctioned and propagated by the Alexandrian Church. This Mark tradition may well have preserved, at least in outline, a record of the first mission to Alexandria; yet the silence of Clement (excepting the *Letter to Theodore*) and Origen concerning it suggests it was not of crucial importance to their identity as Alexandrian Christians. The metamorphosis of this tradition into the form in which Eusebius knew it should be seen in the context of the development of the institutional Church in Alexandria during the episcopate of Demetrius.

Under Demetrius, we see the consolidation of the power of the Bishop of Alexandria, contact with Christian communities elsewhere in the Mediterranean world, and – for the first time – Christian communities outside Alexandria (Jakab 2001, pp. 175–214). Through the development of a monarchic episcopate, the Bishop of Alexandria asserted his control over Christianity in the city, and the province. One aspect of this can be seen in a formalization of catechetical education, previously a largely private affair but now more tightly tied to the institutional Church, as the teachers who provided it were subject to increasing episcopal oversight. The Alexandrian Church also became more involved in this period in “Christian politics” and theological debates within the wider Roman Empire. A letter by Palestinian bishops on the date of the Paschal Festival testifies to a knowledge in Palestine of Alexandrian practice and an epistolary exchange on the issue between the two provinces (Eusebius, *HE* 5.25; Jakab 2001, pp. 216–217). Another letter, perhaps written c. AD 200 by Bishop Alexander of Jerusalem, counsels the Christians of the

Hadrianic foundation Antinoopolis to “be of one mind,” and provides our first clear witness to a Christian community outside of Alexandria (Eusebius, *HE* 6.11.3; Wipszycka 2015, pp. 72–73).

Before Demetrius, we have no contemporary evidence for bishops in Alexandria or Egypt. Indeed, diverse sources from Late Antiquity and the Early Medieval Period report that the presbyters of the early Alexandrian Church elected one of their own to be their leader (Camplani 2011a; Wipszycka 2015, pp. 45–60). Several later sources indicate that Egyptian bishoprics outside of Alexandria first came into being in the time of Demetrius. Summarizing the *Apology for Origen* by Pamphilus and Eusebius, Photius reports that the excommunication of Origen after his ordination in Caesarea (see later) was carried out by Demetrius “and some Egyptian bishops” (*Bibliotheca*, 118). The existence of other bishops is corroborated by the “Antiochian” recension of the *Annals* of Eutychius (Saʿīd ibn ʿĪṣāq, Melchite patriarch of Alexandria 933–940), which in part (and at this point) represents an expansion of Eutychius’ work by the eleventh-century writer Yaḥya ibn Saʿīd al-Anṭākī (see Simonsohn 2013). This records that Demetrius was the first to ordain bishops outside Alexandria, and that he ordained three (*Annals* IX.5, trans. Pirone 1987, p. 159; see Breydy 1985, p. 45, n.3; Breydy 1983, p. 85). The *Annals* arguably reach here back to the tradition found in the Late Antique compilation the *History of the Episcopate of Alexandria* (see later), the Ethiopic translation of which states that Demetrius ordained 10 bishops; the only name of a see that remains in the lacunose text is that of Ptolemais, probably the city in the Thebaid (Bausi and Camplani 2013, pp. 235, 240, 245–246; Wipszycka 2015, pp. 60–74; see in general Martin 1996, pp. 17–115).

29.3 Christians up the Nile

The spread of Christianity beyond Alexandria under Demetrius finds some confirmation in the papyrological record. The documentary and archeological record for the second century preserves no trace of Christianity: those letters on papyrus that have been suggested to proceed from a Christian context (BGU I 246; P.Mich. VIII 482; C.Epist.Lat 169; P.Oxy. XLII 3057; Naldini 1998, nos. 1–3; Blumell 2010) feature nothing more than a shared monotheistic phraseology or phrases whose resemblance to Scripture is probably coincidental. If there were Christians in the second-century *chora*, they did not use the scribal and formulaic markers that were later to become associated with Christianity in the documentary papyri, such as the so-called *nomina sacra* and the Pauline “in the Lord” theological formulation (Blumell 2012, pp. 36–88; Luijendijk 2008, pp. 31–38, 57–78; Choat 2006, pp. 101–125). These are first found in a letter paleographically dated to the early third century (but which may be from later in that century: P.Bas. I 16; Naldini 1998, no. 4), which aligns with the spread of Christianity into the *chora* detectable under Demetrius. While the letter is unprovenanced, its discussion of nomination to the gymnasiarchy and the council (*boule*) indicate its correspondents are among the land-owning classes.

Christian scriptural and other literary texts from the second and third centuries provide another perspective on Christianity’s advance beyond Alexandria (Roberts 1979;

Bagnall 2009a; *contra* more extreme speculations, there are no Christian papyri from the first century AD). The effort to locate such texts is hampered by what is usually unreliable or non-existent information on the provenance of papyri purchased via the antiquities trade. In turn, papyri that can be securely located do not provide any guarantee that they were used where they were found at the time when they were written (Wipszycka 2015, pp. 64–66). Most problematic is the question of when exactly that was. The wide range of proposed dates for many New Testament papyri eloquently testifies to the imprecision of paleographical dating, and recent scholarship has exposed more clearly the insecure foundations on which many paleographical dates assigned to Christian texts rest, especially those placed in the second and early third centuries (Nongbri 2005, 2014a). Disputes over the dating of pre-Constantinian Christian papyri extend beyond this to the principles on which such papyri should be dated (Orsini and Clarysse 2012; see also Chapter 39).

It is in any case not to be expected that we should find many papyri copied by Christians from the second century, given how small their numbers in the *chora* are likely to have been (Bagnall 2009a, pp. 19–21). It seems probable that as few as 10 literary papyri that reflect Christian content or scribal habits should be assigned to the second century, and they can tell us little about the spread of Christianity (Bagnall 2009a, pp. 9–24; cf. Hurtado 2006). Many of these have been dated later in that century, and if taken together with the c. 30 papyri dated to the turn of the third or the early third century, they provide a corpus of Christian literary texts that were – allowing always for the imprecision of paleographical dating – probably copied during the episcopate of Demetrius. These suggest a Christian presence in nome *metropoleis* such as Antinoopolis, Oxyrhynchos, and Hermopolis Magna, as well as villages such as Hipponon in the Herakleopolite nome. Among them we find the New Testament and Septuagint (in copies using the *nomina sacra*, so probably for Christian rather than Jewish use), non-canonical gospels, quasi-canonical texts such as the Shepherd of Hermas, and works of Christian literature of both known (Irenaeus) and unknown authorship. We can press the details little further than this, and it would be best merely to note that the first papyrological indications of the presence of Christians down the Nile coincide with what we can derive from other sources, namely the episcopate of Demetrius.

The historiographical tradition on Origen (c. 185–255) finds its roots in Late Antique conflict over his legacy, and accounts deriving from supporters and opponents must be carefully parsed (McGuckin 2004, pp. 1–24; Jakab 2001, pp. 141–73). However the record is read, his contribution to Christian thought is immense, extending from his personal teaching activities to his influence on later ascetic theology. Origen’s learning proceeded from a “comprehensive education” (including both the scriptures and “Hellenic sciences”) provided by his father, through grammatical and literary training acquired while under the patronage of a wealthy Alexandrian woman (Eusebius, *HE* 6.1–2), to studies with the Neoplatonic philosopher Ammonius Saccas (Porphyry *ap.* Eusebius, *HE* 6.19.6–7). This gave him mastery of the philosophical, text-critical, and scriptural traditions of Alexandria, the inheritance of which can be seen in his many works (McGuckin 2004, pp. 25–44). Throughout his time in the city, Origen moved from offering basic secular education to catechetical training (with the approval of Demetrius, Eusebius, *HE*

6.14.11). When the latter left him no time for his own studies, he handed over the catechetical teaching to Heraclas (later Bishop of Alexandria), reserving for himself advanced theological instruction (Eusebius, *HE* 6.15).

Even if Origen was neither Clement's "successor" nor his pupil (*pace* Eusebius *HE* 6.3.3, 6.6), he nevertheless located himself in a tradition of independent Christian teachers stretching back to Pantaenus (*HE* 6.19.13), which sat uneasily within the monarchic episcopate of Demetrius. While theological differences undoubtedly contributed to the breakdown of relations between Origen and Demetrius, it is likely that neither fully accepted the other's authority within Alexandria. These conflicts expressed themselves in the sphere of interprovincial ecclesiastical politics. Origen himself traveled extensively in the second and third decades of the third century, both on his own initiative, and, as his reputation grew, at the invitation of others, including foreign bishops, provincial governors, and the imperial court (Eusebius, *HE* 6.19.15, 6.19.17–18, 6.21.3–4). A journey through Palestine on his way to Greece occasioned by "ecclesiastical matters" (Eusebius, *HE* 6.23.4), in the course of which he was ordained as presbyter by the Palestinian bishops, led to a decisive break with Demetrius. This resulted in Demetrius deposing and excommunicating Origen, and in the latter making his final departure from Alexandria c. AD 234.

If the details, motivations, and even historical reliability of some of these events are difficult to assess within the contested historiography, it is nevertheless clear that the Alexandrian Church became increasingly involved in interprovincial conversations on theology and ecclesiastical practice during the first half of the third century. Within Egypt itself, Christianity spread further down the Nile in this period. Literary papyri show the circulation of canonical and non-canonical scriptures and other Christian texts in nome capitals as far south as Hermopolis, and in Karanis in the Fayum (Schwendner 2009), where documentary papyri also show the presence of Christians. "Antonius Dioskoros son of Origen, Alexandrian" is labeled as a "Christian" (the earliest use of the word in documentary papyri) in a list, dating to sometime in the first half of the third century, of nominations to the liturgical position of supervisor of "the water-tower and fountains of the metropolis" of Arsinoe/Krokodilopolis (SB XVI 12497; van Minnen 1994), the capital of the Fayum. Not only did this Alexandrian citizen have the necessary landholdings to be subject to the compulsory public services, but his religious adherence was sufficiently well known to be used to identify him on administrative documents.

This papyrus may date to the episcopate of Demetrius, or to that of his successor Heraclas, who succeeded him as Bishop of Alexandria c. 232. This former pupil of Origen, catechetical teacher, and devotee of philosophy (who wore his philosopher's cloak even after he joined the clergy; Eusebius, *HE* 6.19.13–14) was the first to be given the title *papas*, "pope" (Eusebius, *HE* 7.7.4). He continued both the fight against "false doctrines" (Eusebius, *HE* 7.7.4) and the expansion of the ecclesiastical infrastructure in the *chora*, ordaining 20 bishops (Eutychius, *Annals*, IX.5, translation Pirone 1987, p. 159); Photius may preserve the name and see of one (*Interrogationes Decem*, 9 (PG 104, 1229), although see Martin 1996, p. 24, n.19).

The efforts of Demetrius and Heraclas in expanding the church beyond Alexandria are decisively attested in the episcopate of the next Bishop of Alexandria, Dionysius

(AD 248–264; see Bienert 1978; Andresen 1979; Clarke 1998; Jakab 2001, pp. 227–55). Dionysius, whose leadership of the catechetical school before his rise to the episcopate shows how fully Christian schooling had been integrated into the Church hierarchy, participated vigorously in interprovincial Christian politics, and dealt with a range of crises affecting Christianity within Egypt. On his ascension to the episcopate, Christians in Alexandria were attacked by someone whose identity Dionysius either did not know or dared not say (Eusebius, *HE* 6.41.1–2). Around the same time, Origen noted the attribution by people of “the present frequency of rebellion” to both the increasing number of Christians and the government’s perceived absence of action against them (*Contra Celsum* 3.15). This changed with the ascension of Decius to the imperial throne.

29.4 The Decian and Valerian Persecutions

If, as seems likely, what is now known as the “Decian persecution” was actually a highly bureaucratic attempt at an empire-wide rededication of the Roman people to the gods, it is clear that Christians were chief among those affected (Rives 1999; Selinger 2002, pp. 27–82). That Dionysius was sought out by imperial officials “at the same hour” as the edict was promulgated in Alexandria (Eusebius, *HE* 6.40.2) indicates clearly that Christians had been deemed in advance to be likely recalcitrants. While Dionysius hid in a deserted spot in Libya, and his clergy scattered throughout Egypt (Eusebius, *HE* 7.11.22–24), Christians suffered the consequences of noncompliance with the order to sacrifice (see Dionysius’ report *ap.* Eusebius, *HE* 6.41–42). There are 46 examples of the “declarations” (*apographai*, customarily called *libelli*, “petitions”) submitted during the action surviving among the papyri (Scholl 2001); none of these document someone identifiable as a Christian, and one is submitted by someone who certainly was not (W.Chr. 125, from a priestess of Petesouchos). Nevertheless, their formulaic stipulation of having “always persisted in sacrificing to the gods” and their multiple-witnessed tasting of sacrificial offerings gives a powerful impression of the public pressure Christians were subjected to in the name of securing the favor of the gods for the empire.

Following Decius’ death in 251, Valerian and Gallienus succeeded a series of short-lived rulers in 253. On February 28, 256, an “order to arrest” was sent by the *prytanis* (head of the council) of Oxyrhynchos to the komarchs and eirenarchs (superintendents of the peace) of the nearby village of Mermertha, requesting that they “at once send up Petosorapis (son) of Horos, Christian (*chresianos*), or yourselves come up” (Figure 29.1). Both the date and the stipulation that the village officials present themselves in place of Petosorapis if he cannot be located make it unlikely that his crime was the *nomen christianorum*. Yet, the fact that he was identified by his religious adherence is nonetheless significant: he may have been the local priest (P.Oxy. XLII 3035; Luijendijk 2008, pp. 177–184; Blumell and Wayment 2015, pp. 393–397).

It was not until more than a year later, in August 257, that the emperors sent a letter to the Roman Senate commanding that Christian clergy be exiled and that gatherings of believers be prohibited (Selinger 2002, pp. 83–89). Dionysius was summoned before the

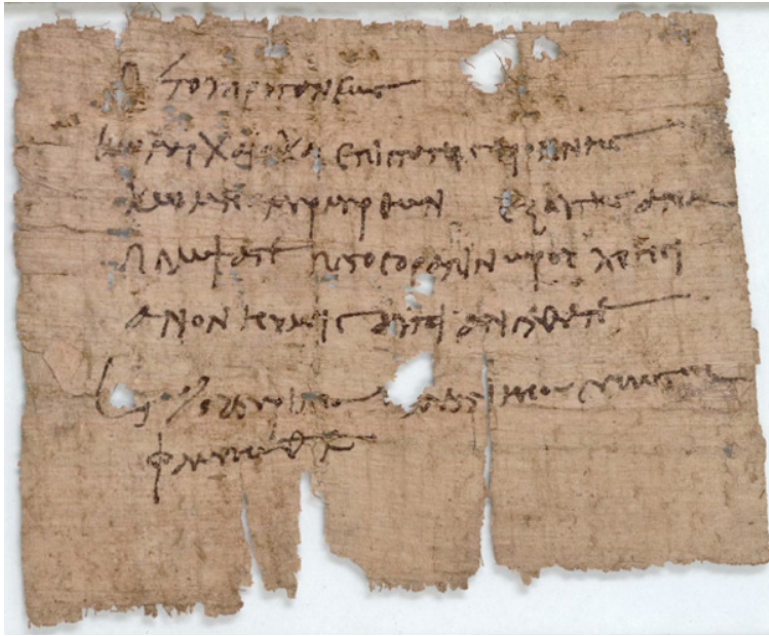


Figure 29.1 Order for arrest of the Christian Petosorapis. This is one of the earliest attestations of the word “Christian” on papyrus (lines 4–5: *χρησιανόν*). AD 256. Source: Oxford, Sackler Library, Papyrology Rooms P.Oxy. 3035, cf. P.Oxy. XLII 3035. Courtesy of the Egypt Exploration Society and Imaging Papyri Project, Oxford.

deputy prefect Aemilianus, who sent him into exile in the western Delta village of Cephro (Eusebius, *HE* 7.11.3–11). His clergy were sent to “villages throughout the *chora*” (Eusebius, *HE* 7.11.14) – a process that may have aided the growth of the communities to which they were sent, as Dionysius himself managed not only to hold assemblies in Cephro, but even to gain new converts (*HE* 7.11.10, 12). This may explain why Aemilianus had him moved to the district of Colluthion, near enough to Alexandria for him to receive regular visitors (*HE* 7.11.15–17).

Dionysius survived unmolested, unlike Cyprian in Carthage, who was beheaded after a further edict of Valerian in August 258 (Cyprian, *Epistulae* 80). A fragmentary official letter from a collection of official correspondence dated to year 7 of Valerian and Gallienus (259/60, or shortly thereafter: the date refers to the previous letter) refers to an assessment, perhaps of the assets and buildings (both words are partially restored) of Christians, by order of a prefect whose name is lost. It was perhaps the “deputy prefect” mentioned in the preceding letter, who must himself be the Aemilianus who interrogated Dionysius (P.Oxy. XLIII 3119; Blumell 2013; Luijendijk 2008, pp. 184–188; Blumell and Wayment 2015, pp. 397–404). Yet, by mid-260, Valerian had been captured by the Persians, and despite a short-lived continuation of persecution in the eastern empire under usurper emperors, Valerian’s son Gallienus replied to a petition of

Dionysius and other bishops, probably presented in 262, confirming the force of an earlier edict (evidently unrecognized in Egypt under the usurpers) and commanding that unspecified persons should “depart from the places of religious worship” (*topoi threkeusimoi*) so that the Christians might return unmolested to them (Eusebius, *HE* 7.13.2–3; Barnes 2010, pp. 99–105).

29.5 An Egyptian Church of Increasing Size and Complexity

It was perhaps after the cessation of persecution – although the date of the episode is not clear – that Dionysius was able to deal with a problem that had arisen in the Fayum (Eusebius, *HE* 7.24). Millenarian doctrines had apparently been prominent and popular there “for a long time,” founded on the *Refutation of the Allegorists* by a certain Bishop Nepos (on whom, see later). Dionysius confronted the issue in person over three days of discussion with the presbyter-teachers (Martin 1996, p. 19, n.10; Wipszycka 2015, p. 71) of the villages, local lay people, and “the author and originator of this teaching,” Korakion. Having convinced them all of the superiority of his exegesis of the Apocalypse, he set it forth in two books *On the Promises* (Eusebius, *HE* 7.25; Bienert 1978, pp. 193–196; Frankfurter 1993, pp. 270–278; Davis 2005; Wipszycka 2015, pp. 70–73).

If there was a bishop in the Arsinoite nome at this stage, Dionysius does not mention him, although the evident strength of Christianity there, and its relative proximity to Alexandria, would have made it an obvious candidate for one. Nepos (see earlier) and Hierax (to whom Dionysius addressed a festal letter; Eusebius, *HE* 7.21.2) are called by Eusebius ἐπίσκοπος τῶν κατ’ Αἴγυπτον (*HE* 7.24.1). Both the exact sense of this phrase (“Bishop of those in Egypt”; “Bishop, one of those in Egypt?”) and whether the formulation is that of Dionysius or of Eusebius himself, is unclear (see Wipszycka 2015, pp. 72–73, who proposes the latter translation and attributes the words to Eusebius). Dionysius also mentions bishops of “the city called Nilos” (north of Herakleopolis, *HE* 6.42.3), the “*paroikia* of Hermopolis” (probably the metropolis in the Thebaid, *HE* 6.46.2; cf. Jerome, *De viris illustribus* 69), Berenike in the Libyan Pentapolis (*HE* 7.26.1), and “the *paroikia* in the Pentapolis” (*HE* 7.26.3). Other recipients of festal letters, which the bishops of Alexandria used both to announce the date of Easter and to pronounce on theological issues (Bienert 1978, pp. 138–177; Eusebius, *HE* 7.11.20–25, 7.20), are also likely to have been bishops.

Alongside running an Egyptian Church of increasing size and administrative complexity, Dionysius also participated vigorously in interprovincial ecclesiastical politics, writing against Sebellianism to various recipients (Eusebius, *HE* 7.26.1), to successive bishops of Rome (as well as Roman presbyters) on the Novatian schism and related issues such as baptism (Eusebius, *HE* 7.6ff), as well as “lengthy discourses in the style of letters” on subjects such as Nature and Temptation (Eusebius, *HE* 7.26.2). By the time of his death in 264, the Egyptian Church had spread down the Nile into Upper Egypt, and was involved closely in the ecclesiastical and theological affairs of Church in the wider Roman Empire.

Under the episcopates of Maximus (264–282) and Theonas (282–300), the Church in Egypt expanded virtually unmolested by Roman authority. Papyrological and other narrative sources compensate for the relative silence of Eusebius. The Ethiopic translation of the *History of the Episcopate of Alexandria* (see later) records the names and sees of 29 bishops ordained by Maximus, showing bishops in Upper Egypt, the Delta, and Libya (Bausi and Camplani 2013, p. 240). A third-century papyrus letter sent from Rome (P.Amh. I 3a; Naldini 1998, no. 6) concerning the exchange of money and commodities mentions “the papas Maximus” and a Theonas, who may be his successor.

Sotas, the Bishop of Oxyrhynchos ordained by Maximus (Bausi and Camplani 2013, p. 247), is the subject of a small archive of letters on papyrus and parchment from the city (Luijendijk 2008, pp. 81–151; Blumell and Wayment 2015, pp. 463–487). The bishop, who is himself called *papas* by the presbyters of Herakleopolis in one letter (P.Oxy. XXXVI 2785), sends and receives “letters of recommendation” (perhaps better, “letters of peace”; see Teeter 1997, PSI IX 1041, PSI III 208, P.Alex. 29, P.Oxy. XXXVI 2785). He discusses arrangements for the donation of a plot of land “according to the ancient custom” to the *topos* (presumably the local church) in another letter (P.Oxy. XII 1492), and is probably also the “Sotas the Christian” with whom a letter-writer sends two talents home from Antioch in SB XII 10772.

Sotas’ letters of recommendation, and a further four dated to the late third or fourth century, demonstrate the growing interconnectivity of Christian communities in Egypt and beyond: one such letter is sent by Theonas to Mensourius, in whose names it is tempting to see the contemporary bishops of Alexandria and Carthage (PSI XV 1560; Naldini 1998, no. 20). Some are written for catechumens, often specifying their level of instruction (e.g. “in Genesis,” “in the beginning of the Gospel”). While the presbyters of Herakleopolis ask that Sotas receive the letter-bearers “for edification” (P.Oxy. XXXVI 2785), such travelers may at times simply have been taking advantage of Christian hospitality at their destination (Blumell 2012, pp. 116–117).

The Ethiopic translation of the *History of the Episcopate of Alexandria* (see later) records that Theonas ordained 50 bishops in 42 different sees, in all the major cities of Upper Egypt as far south as Ptolemais Hermiou, and throughout the Delta and Pentapolis (Bausi and Camplani 2013, pp. 240, 242). The spread of the Church in the *chora* in the second half of the third century is further reflected in the steadily increasing amount of Christian literary papyri dated to the third century. The New Testament and Septuagint are attested in growing numbers, as are apocryphal scripture, hymns, prayers, and otherwise unknown Christian literature (Hurtado 2006, pp. 210–29). The provenance of the texts (where known) stretches from the Fayum, through the Nile *metropoleis*, as far south as Panopolis. Among these papyri we find the first texts in Coptic, largely glossaries or glosses on Greek texts, attesting to missionary activity among the Egyptian-speaking population of the *chora* (Choat 2012).

In 300, Theonas’ successor Peter (Vivian 1988) inherited a Church that extended from Libya and the Delta down the Nile to Upper Egypt. He expanded it further, ordaining 55 bishops, including in Latopolis (Esna) in the south and the Great Oasis in the Western Desert (according to the *History of the Episcopate of Alexandria*; see Bausi and Camplani 2013, pp. 240–242). In Kellis in the Dakhla Oasis, a domestic space was converted into a “house church” by the end of the third century (Bowen 2003). Under

Peter, the first free-standing church was built in Alexandria, at its western edge near the cemeteries, consecrated in the name of Theonas (Haas 2014, p. 209; McKenzie 2007, pp. 240–242).

29.6 The Egyptian Church Challenged Again: The Great Persecution and Schisms

The Christian community then endured nearly a decade of imperial persecution, begun under Diocletian and Galerius in February 303, and only finally lifted in the East by a decree of Licinius in 313 (the so-called “Edict of Milan”; Barnes 2010, pp. 97–98). This came too late for Peter, who had been executed under Maximinus in November 311. Throughout Egypt, Christians were subjected to various aggravations (for one, see P Oxy. XXXI 2601; Blumell and Wayment 2015, pp. 500–506), Church property was confiscated (even from the “former *ekklesia*” in the small village of Chysis, south of Oxyrhynchos; P.Oxy. XXXIII 2673; see Choat and Yuen-Collingridge 2009; Blumell and Wayment 2015, pp. 411–421), and an unknown but substantial number of Christians were martyred.

The martyrdoms gave rise to the cult of the saints, supported by literary accounts of the martyrs’ defiance of the persecutors and of their courageous deaths (Papaconstantinou 2001). Some of these, like the Acts of Phileas, Bishop of Thmouis in the Delta, were circulating in multiple forms within decades of the martyr’s execution (Pietersma 1984). The roots of the Melitian schism can also be found in the persecution. The schism, which takes its name from Melitius, who had been ordained as Bishop of Lykopolis (Asyut) by Theonas (Bausi and Camplani 2013, pp. 243–244), spawned a parallel Church that lasted into the eighth century. Opinions differ on its ultimate cause, but among the possible precipitating factors are the ordinations Melitius carried out in the sees of other bishops and his clash with Peter over the treatment of those who had lapsed during persecution (Hauben 2012; Camplani 2011a; Martin 1996, pp. 219–393; see Chapter 5).

The effects of persecution notwithstanding, the documentary papyri from the first quarter of the fourth century show Christianity’s heightened public presence (Judge and Pickering 1977). Already, an *ekklesia* had stood in the Oxyrhynchite village of Chysis in the early fourth century (P.Oxy. XXXIII 2673; see earlier); a list of watchmen from Oxyrhynchos dated (perhaps some decades) after 295 records guards placed at the north and south *ekklesiiai*, which are presumably churches (P.Oxy. I 43 verso; Blumell and Wayment 2015, pp. 408–411). A list of buildings in Panopolis, perhaps compiled AD 315–330, lists a “House and *ekklesia* of(?) Se ...” (P.Berl.Bork.; Wipszycka 2001, p. 1308), perhaps the house of a Christian leader that had become a place of assembly. An Oxyrhynchite taxation list, probably dated 313–320, includes Apphous, deacon (*diakon*) of (the) *ekklesia*, listed under the village of Mermerthon (P.Oxy. XLV 3787; Blumell and Wayment 2015, pp. 425–427). On the eve of Constantine’s victory over Licinius in 324, a resident of Karanis in the Fayum listed as witnesses in a petition a deacon and a monk (*monachos* – the first securely dated reference to such a figure) who had observed his beating on the streets of the village (P.Col. VII 171, June 6, 324; Judge 1977; Choat 2002).

After the short episcopate of Achillas (312), Alexander (Bishop of Alexandria 312–328) faced the new challenge brought on by the teachings of the Alexandrian presbyter Arius (see Chapter 5). A gathering of nearly 100 bishops (as claimed by Alexander) from Egypt and Libya, which condemned Arius and the Alexandrian clergy who followed him (Opitz 1934, no. 4b.11, cf. no. 6), is testimony to the rapid spread of Christianity in Egypt in the preceding century. No list of these bishops survives, but the identities of 73 of their sees are known or can be reasonably extrapolated from later records (Martin 1996, pp. 28–115). Such internal maneuverings failed, however, to quell the crisis, which in short order engulfed the entire eastern Mediterranean (Gwynn 2007; Barnes 1993), and lasted well beyond the ecumenical council Constantine called at Nicaea in 325 to resolve the issue.

Athanasius, one of Alexander's deacons at Nicaea, was overseas when Alexander died in 328, and returned home to participate in a disputed episcopal election. Claims of his secret consecration by night ring more true than Athanasian assertions of popular unanimity (Barnes 1993, p. 18; Gwynn 2012, pp. 25–26; Martin 1996, pp. 321–339). Reports of the violence into which the dissent descended survive both in the ecclesiastical historians and in a contemporary papyrus letter written by Melitians (P.Lond. VI 1914; Gwynn 2012, pp. 26–37). Through a combination of powerful international enemies (frequently including the emperor himself) and his own disinclination to compromise, Athanasius endured no less than five periods of exile during his long and turbulent episcopate (see Chapter 5). Throughout, Athanasius retained the support of a substantial portion of the local population, as well as considerable backing abroad. Within Egypt, one of the most significant relationships he formed was with the monastic movement.

29.7 The Monastic Movement

Ascetic currents that can be traced back through Origen to earlier traditions developed in different forms in Egypt during the second half of the third century. Manichaean missionaries, who spread the teachings of their prophet Mani (c. 216–276) to Egypt by the final quarter of the century, drew reactions from across the religious spectrum (see Chapter 5). A letter on papyrus warning of the sect paleographically dated to the late third century was perhaps sent by Theonas himself (P.Ryl. III 469), while in late third-century Lykopolis, a treatise against the Manichaeans was written by the Platonic philosopher Alexander (van der Horst and Mansfeld 1974; van Oort 2013). In the same period, the bilingual polymath Hieracas established a rigorous ascetic community in Leontopolis in the Delta. His doctrines, which denied the married entry to heaven, were sufficiently influential to still require rebuttal by Athanasius four decades later (Goehring 1999a). Before this, c. 270, Antony, the son of wealthy Egyptian parents in the Herakleopolite village of Koma (Sozomen, *HE* 1.13; Falivene 1998, pp. 109–112), renounced his inheritance, placed his sister in a local community of virgins, and withdrew to solitary asceticism at the edge of his village (*Vita Antonii* 1–3) (see Table 29.2). When the history of monasticism was first written in the fourth century, his withdrawal was held to be its starting point. If this rhetoric of novelty is undercut by the *Life of Antony*'s own mention of those who had long

Table 29.2 An expanding monastic movement.

<i>Founder</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Monastic communities</i>
Antony	c. 270	Traditional starting point of monasticism: Antony's withdrawal from inheritance to solitary asceticism at the edge of his village (Herakleopolite village of Koma); developed into Antonian communities
Pachomius	c. 323	First coenobitic community: nine male and two female monasteries formed a <i>koinonia</i> (federation), stretching from Latopolis to Panopolis, centered on the monastery of Pbow (modern Faw Qibli)
Amun	c. 315–330	For the rules of Pachomius, see Chapter 30 Semi-anchoretic community at Nitria, in the south-west of the Delta, and later at the <i>laurae</i> at Kellia, 12 miles farther south
Macarius "the Great" (visited Antony for spiritual guidance)	c. 330	Community at Sketis in the south-west of the Delta, which will develop into the great semi-anchoretic monasteries of the Wadi Natrun (monasteries of Baramus, Macarius, Bishoi, and John Kolobos)
Melitians	Before 330s	Melitian network, from the Herakleopolite nome to Upper Egypt See e.g. P.Lond. VI and P.Neph., archives of Paieous and Nephros, respectively – the heads of a Melitian monastery called Hathor
Apa Apollo	Second half of the fourth century	Monastery in Bawit, 28 km south-west of Hermopolis, probably with separate male and female communities in the northern and southern parts of the site
Apa Pgol (Shenoute's uncle)	c. 360	White Monastery, the center of the small monastic federation on the west bank of the Nile opposite Panopolis, with one female and two male communities Most texts from the White Monastery library postdate AD 800

Anchorites: Solitary monks, who dwelt in caves, tombs, or mud-brick cells, often with other anchorites nearby.

Laurae: Initially unwallled, semi-anchoretic monasteries, where monks lived separately or in small groups in cells scattered around a church and communal facilities.

Coenobia: Walled, coenobitic monasteries, stressing community life.

"practiced *asceticism* near their own village in solitude," Christian asceticism was nonetheless gathering pace and popularity in the second half of the third century, ready to be launched into the world in the fourth.

When Antony died c. 356, his *Life* was swiftly written. All manuscripts and early testimony ascribe it to Athanasius, although modern dissention has persisted (Brakke 1994; Barnes 2010, pp. 167–170). The *Life* looks back to a time when "there were not yet many monasteries in Egypt and no monk knew at all the great desert" (*Vita Antonii* 3) from a

period in which monastic communities of all types dotted the Egyptian landscape. The pattern of communal asceticism in contact with secular society seen in the community of Hieracas was further developed by Pachomius, who began his monastic career in Upper Egypt in the decade following the great persecution. Dwelling first with an ascetic master among many monks on a hillside near the village of Shenaset (Greek: *Chenoboskion*), he later moved to the village of Tabbenesi to “live the anchoritic life together” with other monks who came to join him. This led to the formation of what came to be regarded as the first coenobitic monastery, or *koinobion*, in which monks lived the “common life,” c. 323. By the time Pachomius died c. 346, nine male and two female monasteries formed a *koinonia* (federation) that stretched from Latopolis some 160 km north to Panopolis, centered on the monastery of Pbow (modern Faw Qibli) near Tabbenesi in the region of modern Qena (Rousseau 1999). The archeological remains of this great monastic system are slight (save for the basilica at Pbow, see later), but it left a rich literary heritage in Greek and Coptic, including multiple Lives of Pachomius, and letters by him (Veilleux 1980–1982; for the rules of Pachomius, see Chapter 30).

Tabennesi may not have been quite as deserted as the rhetorical posture of the *Life of Pachomius* implies, and these monasteries had a symbiotic relationship with nearby villages and towns, within whose boundaries they sometimes stood (Goehring 1999b). Nor should Pachomius be thought of as a unique innovator: the Melitian monastic network visible in two fourth-century papyrus archives comprised a number of monasteries, from the Herakleopolite nome (whence these archives) to Upper Egypt (Goehring 1999d; Hauben 2002). Pachomius and the Melitians may best be viewed as competing responses to the ascetic impulse in early fourth-century Egypt.

A Lower Egyptian expression of monastic life formed around Amun at Nitria, in the south-west of the Delta, c. 315–330. Those seeking deeper isolation founded Kellia 12 miles to the south, from which monastic heartland later sprung the *Apophthegmata Patrum*, or *Sayings of the Desert Fathers* (Wipszycka 2009, pp. 124–126, 206–212). Some distance farther south, at Sketis, a Macarius, later known as “the Great” (or “the Egyptian,” to distinguish him from a like-named individual at Kellia), established a community c. 330, which developed over time into the great monasteries that still stand in the modern Wadi Natrun (Evelyn White 1932; Harmless 2004, pp. 167–282). Monasticism in this region was characterized by the dwellings known as *laurae* – self-contained cells, built either above ground or in caves, in which a master dwelt with a small number of disciples (Wipszycka 2009, pp. 288–290) – complemented by communal facilities such as churches and workshops. Hundreds of these cells were built on the plains of Kellia, where they can still be seen, and later examples of such habitations can be found in sites such as Esna in Upper Egypt (Sauneron et al. 1972).

Late Antique discussions divided Egyptian monasticism into three “types”: anchoritic (living in solitude, exemplified by Antony), semi-anchoritic (dwelling in the *laurae*), and coenobitic (living communally) (Choat 2004). However, the many communities in which monks dwelt in “solitude” in individual cells (often in the tombs of pharaonic necropoleis) near to their fellow anchorites, with some form of organization and communality, demonstrate how little these neat divisions correspond to the lived reality of the monastic life. Meanwhile, authors such as Jerome and Cassian list alongside these “approved” expressions of monasticism a detested “fourth type,” who followed neither orders nor an

endorsed pattern of living. These variously named groups of monks are not entirely co-extensive with the many and various urban expressions of the monastic life to which the papyri bear witness, but reveal the abundant variety in which monasticism expressed itself (Goehring 1999c; Judge 1977; Choat 2002; Wipszycka 2009, pp. 292–323). Athanasius himself was a vigorous participant in debates over right form and practice, and the relationships he built with monastic communities bound the monastic movement more closely to him personally, and to the ecclesiastical establishment of Alexandria in general (Brakke 1995); the progressive integration of the ecclesiastical and monastic spheres can be witnessed in the succeeding centuries (Giorda 2010).

Throughout the second half of the fourth century and beyond, the international fame of the monastic movement in Egypt was augmented by the spread of literature generated by and documenting the phenomenon (Harmless 2004; Wipszycka 2009, pp. 9–67). This included travelogs recounting pious voyages to monastic sites (see Chapter 5), reflections on time spent in Egyptian monastic communities by Latin writers (John Cassian), and translations of monastic literature into Latin, such as the immediately popular *Life of Antony* and Pachomian literature translated by Jerome. The “Sayings” (*apophthegmata*) of the Lower Egyptian monks were given literary form in fifth-century Palestine, and spread throughout the Christian world in a variety of collections and languages. The impact of both neo-Platonic philosophy and Origen’s theology can be seen in works written by monks such as Evagrius Ponticus, who lived in Nitria and Kellia from 380 until his death in 399.

Nowhere in all this Greek and Latin monastic literature occurs one of the most prominent monastic leaders in late fourth- and fifth-century Egypt. Shenoute of Atripe became head of the monastery founded by his uncle Pgol c. 385, and led it until his death some 80 years later. Shenoute, the most prolific author in Coptic whose works survive from Late Antiquity, wrote nine volumes of *Canons*, eight volumes of *Discourses* (*logoi* – mainly sermons and homilies), and numerous letters. Most of this was preserved in the library of the White Monastery, the center of the small monastic federation he led at the base of the escarpment on the west bank of the Nile opposite Panopolis, where a church built in his lifetime still stands (Emmel 2004; Layton 2014, pp. 3–34; Brakke and Crislip 2015) (Figure 29.2). After his death, this influential monk became one of the most important saints in the Coptic Church, yet he was totally unknown in the West before 1670 (Emmel 2004, 1, pp. 14–18).

Within Egypt, a different sort of marginalization was visited on a monastic tradition centered round the monastery of Apa Apollo in Bawit, 28 km south-west of Hermopolis. While its founder lived in the second half of the fourth century, the extensive archeological and papyrological remains belong to the sixth–eighth centuries (Wipszycka 2009, pp. 86–87). A monastic network that held Apollo and other Middle Egyptian monks of this tradition in high regard can be detected in inscriptions and Coptic hagiographical texts from the monastery of Jeremias at Memphis to the *laurae* of Esna, but is largely independent of the better-known Antonian, Pachomian, and semi-anchoretic Lower Egyptian traditions (Orlandi 2004). Some time in Late Antiquity, monastic habitation began to spread through the large pharaonic necropolis of Western Thebes, developing by the seventh century into a sacred landscape comprising large monasteries, smaller communities, and hundreds of monastic cells (see later).



Figure 29.2 Church of the White Monastery, built in Shenoute's lifetime. Source: Image courtesy Malcolm Choat.

29.8 The Alexandrian Church from the Death of Athanasius to Chalcedon

Athanasius' successor Peter II (373–380) was confronted by further “Arian” opposition, and endured both a papal rival and a period in exile. It was not until the episcopate of his brother Timothy (380–385) that the emperor Theodosius I gave imperial backing to the resolutions of a council in Constantinople in 381, which vindicated the Nicene theology.

Under Peter II and his successor Theophilus (385–412), the *History of the Episcopate of Alexandria* was compiled (Bausi and Camplani 2013; Camplani 2004; Wipszycka 2015, pp. 22–24). This dossier drew on the archives of the Alexandrian Church to chronicle the episcopal ordinations of the bishops of Alexandria, Athanasius' episcopate (the so-called *Historia Acephala*), the Melitian schism and dispute with Arius, and the manner in which the early Alexandrian bishops were chosen. Peter I (whose life and martyrdom received sustained reflection) and Mark the Evangelist formed the twin axes around which the compilers' historical conception of Alexandrian Christianity pivoted (Bausi and Camplani 2013, p. 238). The martyrological traditions on Mark and

Peter provide valuable information on the contemporary topography of the Christian community. In the case of the Markan tradition, the concentration on the north-western and north-eastern sectors of the city may reveal not only the centers of the early fourth-century Alexandrian Christian community, but also the location of the earliest Egyptian Christians (Pearson 2004, pp. 100–113). Here, in the late fourth century, we first see the fully developed version of the foundation narrative of Alexandrian Christianity, whose location within a concern with the ecclesiastical organization of the Egyptian Church anchors its propagation within the Alexandrian one.

The episcopate of Theophilus (385–412) is marked by further religious conflict. Conflict with supporters of the traditional order ended with the destruction of the Serapeum and its replacement with a new church (see Chapter 5). Within Christianity, the consequences of Origen’s theology played out in Theophilus’ public avowal of a doctrine of the incorporeality of God, followed by a swift retraction in the face of trenchant monastic opposition. The “anthropomorphite” or “Origenist” controversy led to the persecution and exile of many monks who held to the theology of Origen, especially in Nitria and Kellia. It spread around the Roman world in the ensuing decades, engendering a conflict with the see of Constantinople (Blaudeau 2006). Ultimately, Origen would be anathematized and his works condemned.

The fifth century brought further decisive confrontation with the wider Christian world under the episcopates of Cyril (412–444) and Dioscorus (444–454), which led to the exile of Dioscorus at the Council of Chalcedon in 451 and parallel networks of episcopal authority and competing ecclesiastical power within the Egyptian Church, which remained essentially unresolved while the province was under Roman rule (see Chapter 5).

Earlier scholarship tended to read the split between the pro- and anti-Chalcedonian parties (the inaccurate and pejorative term “monophysite” should be retired) as aligning with an ethnic division between “Greeks” and “Copts”: between a more Hellenized imperially supported Church and one that was more ethnically and linguistically Egyptian. The actual situation was far more nuanced, however. Late Antique Egypt should not be viewed in terms of separate and competing “Greek” and “Coptic” cultures: from Alexandria to Aswan, people participated to various degrees in the Classical, Christian, and Egyptian elements that contributed to their cultural milieu. Bilingualism was common, and even someone who expressed themselves publically in Coptic, such as Shenoute, betrays a Greek education and familiarity with the Classical tradition (see Box 19.1). Both resistance and adherence to Chalcedon cut across geographic and linguistic lines. Nevertheless, what power base existed in Egypt for pro-Chalcedonian adherents remained small, and mainly confined to Alexandria and its vicinity.

29.9 Christians, Literary Activity, and the Archeological Record

Christian manuscript cultures blossomed in Late Antiquity. Large manuscript caches from Upper Egypt, such as the Nag Hammadi and “Dishna” Libraries (Meyer 2007; Robinson 2011; Lundhaug and Jenott 2015), and a number of Christian codices in a

similar format from the region of Achmim (Gascou 1989, pp. 81–83), attest to Christian book production in the fourth and fifth centuries. Further caches, like the sixth-century manuscripts of Origen and Didymus the Blind from Tura, survive from later periods (Koenen and Müller-Wiener 1968). Alongside these more complete manuscripts, an exponentially increasing number of Christian literary texts on papyrus and parchment in a more fragmentary form show manuscript production within and outside monasteries in Late Antique Egypt.

This literary activity attests to the exponential growth of Christianity among the Egyptian population. Estimating the percentage of Christians, however, remains difficult. Certainly by the sixth century, when Justinian – perhaps merely symbolically – ordered the temple of Isis at Philae be closed, the local cults had long since ceased (Dijkstra 2011). Scribal and formulaic markers of Christian identity, which appear with increasing frequency among the documentary papyri, especially in private letters, provide no more than a vague impression of a steady growth toward a virtually fully Christianized world. Onomastics may provide the best indication of the rate of Christianization. The occurrence of Christian names in documents indicates that by the conversion of Constantine in 313, c. 20% of Egypt's population was Christian, rising to around 75% by the end of the century, and nearing 100% by the middle of the fifth (Bagnall 1982, 1987; Blumell 2012, pp. 237–279; Depauw and Clarysse 2013).

The archeological presence of Christianity develops more slowly. In Alexandria, the Late Antique record must be reconstructed from literary reports and hints gleaned from the premodern city, which indicate that over 20 churches stood in Late Antique Alexandria (McKenzie 2007, pp. 236–260). A contemporary example in an urban setting may be seen in the fifth-century basilica in Hermopolis (McKenzie 2007, pp. 284–287; Grossmann 2002a, pp. 441–443). Already in the late third century, a house church stood in the Great Oasis village of Kellis, and a cathedral church was built on the site in the time of Constantine (Bowen 2002). A string of pre-conquest churches from throughout Egypt testifies to the increased public presence that imperial support enabled (Grossmann 2002a; McKenzie 2007, pp. 261–321).

The archeological record for most monastic sites begins in the sixth century at the earliest, even at settlements that the literary record tells us were founded in the fourth. The fifth-century church still stands at the White Monastery, and a triconch funerary chapel featuring the image of Shenoute – which may be the shrine of the Archimandrite himself – may date to shortly after his death (Bolman et al. 2010). The church at the nearby Red Monastery was first constructed in the sixth century, when its decorative program, the most extensive and impressive from Late Antique Egypt, was begun (Bolman 2006, 2016). Of the Pachomian federation, little remains, except for the remnants of the great basilica at Pbow (Faw Qibli; Grossmann 2002a, pp. 546–552). Extensive coenobitic settlements survive in the monastery of Apa Jeremias (which stretches over two hectares in the necropolis of Saqqara; Wietheger 1992), the monastery of Apa Apollo at Bawit (see earlier), and the monastery of Apa Thomas at Wadi Sarga (O'Connell 2014). Well-preserved “laura”-style hermitages are found on the escarpment behind Esna (Latopolis), as well as at Deir el-Naqlun in the Fayum, where they are associated with a coenobitic settlement at the base of the mountain (Sauneron et al. 1972; Wipszycka 2009, pp. 128–138).

Toward the end of the Byzantine Period, the pharaonic necropolis in Western Thebes became a major center of monastic activity. In the late sixth century, the village of Jeme legally ceded the *topos* of St. Phoibammon to a group of monks (P.KRU 105; MacCoull 2009, pp. 8–10). This monastery, built on the site of the mortuary temple of Hatshepsut (Deir el-Bahari), became the center of an extensive monastic network in the area, and the seat of Abraham, Bishop of Ermont in the episcopate of the Patriarch Damian (Godlewski 1986). Many monastic settlements are apparent among the tombs, including the adjoining monasteries of Epiphanius and Kyriakos on Sheik abd-el Gurneh, the much larger monastery of Paul at Deir el-Bakhit on Dra Abu el-Naga, and the later cells of Frange and other anchorites at the south end of Sheik Abd-el Qurna (Wipszycka 2009, pp. 171–196). Within the papyrological record, extensive networks of monasteries can be witnessed in sixth-century papyri from Oxyrhynchos (especially the Apion archive) and Aphrodito (MacCoull 1993). Read together, the literary, papyrology, and archeological records vividly illustrate the central role monasticism played in Byzantine Egypt, and its intimate connection with secular society, despite its rhetorical distance from it.

29.10 Changing Imperial Theological Preferences

In the two centuries between Chalcedon and the final loss of Egypt from the Roman world, changing imperial theological preferences caused regular shifts of power within the Egyptian Church (Davis 2004, pp. 85–128). Imperial support for pro-Chalcedonian appointees to the Bishopric of Alexandria allowed anti-Chalcedonians to cast their leaders as inheritors of a tradition of resistance to impious imperial power stretching back through Dioscorus, Cyril, and Athanasius to the martyrs. Continuing dissention was punctuated by failed attempts at reconciliation, such as the “Henoticon” sponsored by the emperor Leo (reigned 457–474). Imperial support of anti-Chalcedonians by Anastasius (reigned 491–518) was succeeded by the hardline Chalcedonian policies of Justin (518–527) and Justinian (527–565). Anti-Chalcedonian bishops exiled to Egypt under Justin both became beloved saints (Severus of Antioch) and engendered further splits within the Egyptian Church (Julian of Halicarnassus). Theological tensions within the imperial family itself meant that Theodosius (Bishop of Alexandria, 536–566) was both reinstalled and exiled by imperial force during his episcopate. In the wake of his death, no less than four men competed for the throne of St. Mark over the next two decades.

The long episcopate of Damian (578–607) witnessed further conflict between the anti-Chalcedonian strongholds of Alexandria and Antioch, healed under Anastasius (607–619). The latter’s successors Andronicus (619–626) and Benjamin (626–665) guided the Church through the upheaval of 10 years of Persian rule (perhaps not as calamitous for the Christian community as some later accounts suggested; Davis 2004, pp. 110–111). Following the Byzantine re-conquest of Egypt, Benjamin dealt with further imperial attempts to enforce unity, this time through the attempted imposition of Monotheletism (“one will”), enforced violently by Cyrus, the (pro-Chalcedonian) Bishop of Alexandria. Cyrus’ recourse to civil and military power in securing allegiance to imperial theology was such that later traditions endowed him with actual secular powers. All this was brought to an end by the severing of Egypt from the Byzantine world by the Arab conquest in AD 642.

29.11 The Arab Conquest and Beyond

The post-conquest Arabic designation of Egyptian Christians as *qibti* (later, and via European linguistic mediation, “Copts”) should not be understood as signaling ethnic, linguistic, or doctrinal unity. Yet, some measure of ecclesiastical cohesion returned to the Egyptian Church, which came progressively to embody the characteristics of national unity that were constructed in the later historiography of the end of Byzantine rule. Benjamin’s relationship with the new power was remembered in various ways in later sources, with the Arabic *History of the Patriarchs of Alexandria* calling forth a vision of a rightful patriarch who was given favor by the conqueror ‘Amr ibn al-‘As, for the success of whose armies he prayed (Evetts 1904, pp. 492–497). But reactions to the new rulers were mixed (Davis 2004, pp. 122–125), and new challenges stood on the horizon for the Egyptian Christian community. It would witness revolts against the Islamic regime, repressive taxation arrangements, the dying out of many monasteries by the end of the first millennium, the supersession of Coptic by Arabic as first a written and then a spoken language by the fourteenth century, and a continuing steady diminution of the Christian community in the centuries that followed. In the short term, however, the use of Coptic for documentary purposes became more common, monasteries flourished along the Nile and became the centers of Coptic culture, and a great age of Coptic manuscript production in the monastic scriptoria was inaugurated.

FURTHER READING

An overview of Christianity in Egypt before the Arab conquest may be found in Davis (2004) and Griggs (1993), with important studies in Wipszycka (2015) and Martin (1996). Athanasius and the fourth century are dealt with by Martin (1996), Barnes (1993), and Gwynn (2012). On the growth of the Church in Late Antique Egypt, see Wipszycka (2007). Camplani provides a set of articles that treat of the historiography of the Alexandrian Church. Introductions to monasticism in Egypt are provided in Harmless (2004) and Wipszycka (2009). McKenzie (2007) provides an overview of Christian architecture in Late Antique Egypt; for a full archeological survey of churches, see Grossmann (2002a). For Christian documentary papyri, see Blumell (2012), Luijendijk (2008), and Choat (2006); Christian papyri from Oxyrhynchus are treated in Blumell and Wayment (2015).

CHAPTER THIRTY

Life Portraits: People in Worship

Gwen Jennes

As is obvious from the previous chapters, religion in Egypt had many different faces. Not only did the gods worshiped differ from region to region, but there was a distinction between the official cults of, for example, Amun, Khnum, and Isis, and those of a more private nature, venerating gods such as Bes and Shai. With the establishment of Greek-Macedonian rule, the Egyptian gods were equated with Greek ones (*interpretatio Graeca*, e.g. Min/Pan), and started to be depicted in Greek fashion in popular art and – eventually – the temples. A new Greek-style god, Sarapis, developed from the Egyptian Osiris-Apis as early as the Early Ptolemaic Period, and his cult became popular even in Rome. Religion changed continually: deified people became part of the pantheon (e.g. Djoser's architect Imhotep), while animal cults became increasingly important over time. Inspired by ancient Egyptian and Greek traditions, people also tried to get into direct contact with the gods through various practices: letters addressed to the gods, oracles and magic, and dream interpretation. The ruler and imperial cults provided a stabilizing bond in the multiethnic and multicultural society of Egypt, until, from the later third century onward, Christianity became a factor in the varied religious landscape. Although the exact pace of Christianization remains difficult to grasp, it was the dominant religion by the end of the fourth century AD. The potential of Christianity to become the new stabilizing agent in the religious landscape was, however, threatened by several schisms and alternative religions, including the Gnostic movements. More than ever before, opinions differed among the faithful.

This chapter illustrates how religion was reflected in the everyday lives of the people, based on four archives from between the second century BC and the fourth century AD. In a final section, the rules of Pachomius – reflecting life in the early monastic settlements – will be briefly discussed.

30.1 Recluses in a Sanctuary: The *Katochoi* of the Memphite Serapeum

The first archive takes us into the walled complex of the great Serapeum of Memphis. The Serapeum was built over the subterranean burial places of the sacred Apis bull and contained a temple not only for Sarapis and his spouse Isis, but also for other deities including Horus, Sechmet, Thoth, and Phoenician Astarte. By Ptolemaic times, the Serapeum enclosure had become a small, lively city of its own, with little shops, priestly dwellings, and other buildings in between the holy spaces (Thompson 2012).

Around 172 BC, Ptolemaios, the son of the Macedonian soldier Glaukias, became a *katochos* in the great Serapeum complex (Thompson 2012, pp. 197–246). The exact meaning of the term *katochos*, literally “detained” or “possessed by the god,” is much debated (Legras 2011, pp. 14–21): it may have been a temple slave, someone who was kept captive because of debts, a recluse (a kind of monk *avant la lettre*), a novice waiting to be introduced into the mysteries, or even an asylum-seeker. Whatever the case, Ptolemaios – unlike some other *katochoi* – was not allowed to leave the temple precinct, and probably not even his cell located near the Astarte shrine. He was therefore dependent on his younger brother Apollonios for contacts with the outside world. While in seclusion, he kept all sorts of records, including petitions, letters, accounts, dream texts, and literary pieces – about 130 texts in all. His papers were found during clandestine excavations, and are now scattered over multiple collections. Greek is the main language (c. 120 documents), the bulk of which has been published by U. Wilcken in his *Urkunden der Ptolemäerzeit* (UPZ I; Thompson 2012, pp. 197–246; texts in translation in Rowlandson 1998, pp. 98–105; TM Arch 119). Ptolemaios’ archive provides a unique view of his life in the Serapeum, as well as into the lives of his fellow *katochoi*, among them Harmais, with whom he shared his cell.

The twin sisters Taous and Tages played, for some time, a significant role in Ptolemaios’ life, as over 40 texts deal with their grievances (UPZ I 17–58; many are drafts of a limited number of petitions). In the mid 160s BC, at around the age of 7, their lives took a turn for the worse. Their mother Nephoris replaced their father by a lover, whereupon the father died out of grief. Nephoris subsequently threw the girls out of the family home, denying them their inheritance. In response, they fled to the Serapeum, where Ptolemaios, an old friend of their father, took care of them (UPZ I 18 and 19, two drafts of the same petition). Ptolemaios portrays himself as savior of the twins.

The girls arrived at the Serapeum prior to April 164 BC, when they were chosen to play the role of Isis and Nephtys during the 70-day period of mourning for the deceased Apis. For this reason, they were brought down to Memphis, where they resided until the burial took place on June 15 (UPZ I 18, 19, and 54). Afterward, they were put on the Serapeum’s pay roll: their task now was to pour libations for Osorapis on behalf of the royal couple (UPZ I 19). Their cultic tasks were, however, not limited to the main god of the Serapeum, as they also served in the cult of his spouse Isis (UPZ I 42) and offered libations for Asklepios/Imhotep at his stone bowls (UPZ I 57). In 158 BC, they were involved in the morning of the Mnevis bull (UPZ I 96), whose cult center was Heliopolis, although these ceremonies too took place in the Serapeum (Thompson 2012, p. 219; see also the invocation of the deceased Mnevis bull by the Memphite priest Horos discussed later).

For their services, they were entitled to generous allowances (Thompson 2012, p. 221) in the form of oil and bread, although it was not easy to receive them. Their half-brother Panchrates cheated them out of their first oil allowance (UPZ I 18 en 19), while later rations were often withheld. In order to have them paid, Ptolemaios helped the twins draft petitions to the king and to lower officials (UPZ I 21–41 (oil), 42–58 (bread)). In the end, they did receive the allowances they were entitled to. Although the twins fled to the temple out of sheer distress, they eventually made a living for themselves, and by 160 BC they were even capable of lending Ptolemaios 5000 drachmas (UPZ I 85); perhaps their father's inheritance had finally made its way to them. The last we hear of the twins is in the year 158 BC (UPZ I 96), and since Ptolemaios' archive goes on until 152, it seems Taous and Tages simply left the temple.

Ptolemaios recorded both his own dreams and those of his acquaintances. Tages often turns up in his; he may have been attracted to her, according to an analysis by a Freudian psychiatrist and a papyrologist (Storch and Heichelheim 1931). A Greek papyrus from his archive records a number of dreams, endorsed with the note "Seven dreams. What I saw regarding the queen (maybe Tages is meant)." Dreams nos. 4–7 run as follows:

(Dream 4) Dream of Ptolemaios on Pachon 15. Two men came to me and said to me: "Ptolemaios, take the blood-money," They count out to me 100 bronze drachmas and for the twin Tages, a purse full of bronze four-drachma coins. They tell her "Here is your bronze blood-money," I told them "She has more bronze money than I."

(Dream 5) The dream that I saw on Pachon 20. I see myself counting (the days of the month) saying "Year 20, (month) Thoth, 1st up to 20th day."

(Dream 6) Year 23, Pachon 4. In the dream I seemed to be calling upon the very great god Ammon to come to me from the north with two companion-gods, until he arrived. It seemed to me that there was a cow in the compound and she was in labor. He (Ammon) takes hold of the cow and he lays her down on her side. He thrusts his hand into her private parts and draws out a bull.

(Dream 7) What I saw in my dream: may it turn out well for me. Pachon 23, on my birthday (June 21 158 BC) (UPZ I 77, col. ii, ll. 1–32; translation Rowlandson 1998, no. 80)

30.2 The Dreams of the Ibis-Priest Horos of Sebennytos

The archive of Horos leads us into the desert to the north-east of the Serapeum enclosure, where the Mother-of-Apis cows, the Horus falcons, and the baboons and ibises sacred to Thoth were buried and venerated. The enormous amount of ibis mummies is striking – about half a million in all – a result of the common practice of pilgrims in Greco-Roman times buying a potted ibis and offering it to Thoth in search of healing or help – just as pilgrims could buy small mummified crocodiles in the Fayum village Tebtynis. The local priests who bred the ibises or took care of the mass burial profited from this lively trade (Thompson 2012, pp. 177–196). One of the ibis-priests, Hor or Horos of Sebennytos, a contemporary of the recluse Ptolemaios, kept his archive in the Southern Ibis Catacombs.

All his dreams, oracles, petitions, memoranda, prayers, and historical texts (dated between 174 and 147 BC) are recorded on potsherds, which were unearthed during excavations of the Egypt Exploration Society in 1965/66 and 1972. Most of the texts are written in Demotic (67 out of 73) and published by Ray (1976) in *The Archive of Hor* (TM Arch 105). Horos' papers provide valuable information on a variety of topics, from political history to the organization and abuses of the flourishing ibis cult. Here, we focus on his personal career and the motivation for some of his decisions.

Horos was born around 200 BC in Per-Thoth (*Pr-Dhwtj*, Ray 1976, p. 117), a village in the Sebennyte nome in the Delta (O.Hor 28). As a *pastophoros*-priest at the Isis temple in Isios Polis in the same nome (Behbeit el-Hagar, O.Hor Gr. C and E), he was also involved in the affairs of a chapel of the sacred ibis (O.Hor 26). Around 172 BC – the same year Ptolemaios became a *katochos* in the Serapeum – Horos attended meetings on reforms of the ibis sanctuary at North Saqqara (O.Hor 19–20, see also 18). Nothing, however, suggests that he lived at that time permanently in Memphis. In 169 BC, we indeed find him in his hometown and in Bouto in the Delta (O.Hor 10; Kockelmann 2008, p. 11). When in spring 168 BC the Seleucid monarch Antiochus IV invaded Egypt for the second time, the day on which the invader would evacuate from the country (July 30, 168 BC) was prophesied in one of his dreams; after the prophecy had been fulfilled – Antiochus did indeed leave Pelusium – Horos was promptly granted audience with Ptolemy VI and his younger brother in the Alexandrian Serapeum. The queen was probably also present. Horos proudly reported on his foretelling dream and on the salvation of Alexandria (O.Hor 2 and 3).

Although Horos was already involved in the affairs of two ibis sanctuaries at this time, he was still devoted to the worship of Isis (Dousa 2002, pp. 158–159, 180), as shown, for instance, by his seven appeals to Isis “to come” to him (O.Hor 10). In 167/6 BC, while he was serving in his hometown sanctuary, Horos saw Isis in a dream, telling him that he would go to Memphis “for ever” (*š3' dt*); Horus replies smartly: “Does a man exist for ever?” and Isis responds that he will spend the rest of his life there, that he will die in happiness (*hn n3 nfr.w*), and that he will be buried in the “house of rest of the House of Apis” (O.Hor 9 verso). Somehow, however, he ended up at the Memphite ibis sanctuary instead of in the service of Isis. His earlier experience with ibis cults may have prompted his choice, but it is clear that his allegiance had shifted from Isis to Thoth somewhere in the first half of the 160s BC (Ray 1976, pp. 48, 120). This change probably resulted from a dream in which Thoth ordered Horos to serve only him: “I am your officer, Thoth. I have told you before, ‘Do not worship any god except me’” (O.Hor 8 recto, ll. 5–6). The promise of spending his further life in Memphis was now guaranteed by Thoth.

At least part of Horos' dreams were deliberately invoked; he talks of “spending two days in making supplication” in the Southern Ibis Galleries of Memphis (O.Hor 13.1–2). They were often addressed to multiple gods, such as Osorapis of Memphis and Osormnevis of Heliopolis, representing the deceased Apis bull and Mnevis bull, respectively:

Come to me, my lord Osorapis and Osormnevis!

Come to me, my great lord Osorapis, the great god, and the gods who rest in the necropolis of the Serapeum and in the necropolis of Hepnebes [near the temple of Isis, mother of the

Apis bull], together with those who rest upon the sleeping place of the House of Thoth [that is the sanctuary of the ibis] in Memphis;

hear my voice, my lord Osormnevis and the gods who rest in (Heliopolis') necropolis of Djedit, together with those who rest in Heliopolis' eastern desert [where Mnevis bulls and other sacred animals were buried]. (O.Hor 13.3–7, translation by Ray)

Some divine utterances were not readily comprehensible, which caused Horos to seek help. One message could only be understood by the magician of Imhotep, after it had already been shown to four others (O.Hor 16 and 17). At one point, he even traveled to Heliopolis for instructions (O.Hor 1). Horos thus appears to have been a pious man whose life was dictated by the gods he worshiped.

30.3 Priestly Worries in Roman Fayum: The Temple of Soknobraisis

The papers of the temple of Soknobraisis give us a window into a Roman Period temple in the Fayum village of Bacchias. This archive mainly consists of yearly reports and their cover letters: 34 Greek papyri dated between AD 116 and 212. Since they were found during clandestine excavations, the documents have become scattered over at least six collections. They are discussed in Gilliam's (1947) study (= P.Bacch., with translations) and in Vandorpe et al. (2015) (TM Arch 235).

The god Soknobkonneus, "Sobek, lord of Genout" (an older religious name of Bacchias; see Yoyotte 1962, pp. 117–178), was already worshiped at Bacchias in the Ptolemaic Period (P.Enteux 54 and P.Fay. 18), whereas Soknobraisis, "Sobek, lord with the terrible mouth" (Yoyotte 1962, pp. 133–134), is only attested in Roman times. They were venerated in two separate but adjacent mud-brick temples (see Capasso 2007, pp. 81–87 on the papyrological evidence, Pernigotti 2010 on the archeological).

In the Roman Period, temples had to submit a yearly report, providing information on their inventory and priests (*graphe hieron kai cheirismou*). These reports were sent to at least five different officials, among whom was the *strategos* or nome governor. Several such reports for the Bacchias temples are extant (AD 116–188): three joint reports for the temples of Soknobraisis and Soknobkonneus (P.Bacch. 1–3) and two for the Soknobraisis temple only (P.Bacch. 4–5). The inventory of the two temples was similar, and held among other things a gilded shrine for the main god, another gilded shrine for the god Pnepheros, bronze trumpet-shaped lampstands, bronze drinking cups, a bronze censer, a bronze kettle, and several musical instruments. There is surprisingly little evolution in the items mentioned over the years, because only a selected group of objects needed to be listed, and not the entire temple inventory (Burkhalter 1985, pp. 131–134). Aside from liturgical objects, the temples owned plots of land, but these were not listed in the reports, although some casual information is given: the land of the Soknobraisis temple was used for oil crops (to produce oil for lighting) and flax (for the manufacture of *byssos*-linen), for example (P.Bacch. 2 and P.Lund IV 9).

According to the reports, the priests of Soknobkonneus had “decreased from a large number to a few”: from 22 or 23 priests in AD 116 to 12 in AD 171 (P.Bacch. 1 and 2; Pestman and Rupprecht 1992, p. 132). The youngest priests in the archive are 13 years old (P.Bacch. 5); there was apparently no upper age limit, as the oldest is 87 (P.Bacch. 2). A college of “elders” or *presbyteroi* was in charge of the temple administration. These were chosen each year from among the priests (*hiercis*). It seems, however, that in a temple with a low number of priests such as that of Soknobraisis (14 in AD 171; P.Bacch. 2), only one *presbyteros* was appointed (Knudtzon 1946, p. 31, n. 14), who might serve in consecutive years.

The priests of Soknobraisis were liable to taxes, such as the poll tax and liturgies (mandatory labor on dikes and state land), just like their fellow villagers (P.Bacch. 2). In AD 171, they complained to the *strategos* Potamon that they were forced to work on dikes far away from home and asked to perform their labor near the village, so that they could exercise their religious duties in the temple (P.Bacch. 19). It seems that shortly afterward, they were released from this liturgy, although they kept struggling to have their rights respected (P.Bacch. 20 and 21).

30.4 The End of Paganism: The Papers of Ammon *Scholasticus*

The archive of Ammon *Scholasticus* is named after its last owner, Aurelius Ammon, son of Petearbeschinis and Senpetechensis (Figure 30.1). It contains 129 Greek texts spanning two generations (TM Arch 31). These documents were sold on the antiquities market, and ended up in at least three different collections: Cologne, Duke, and the Istituto Vitelli in Florence. Two volumes are published so far, the first by Willis and Maresch (1997 = P.Ammon I) and the second by Maresch and Andorlini (2006 = P.Ammon II). Ammon’s documents belong to the late third and the first half of the fourth centuries (c. AD 281–366), and inform us about a time when pagan religion was losing ground to Christianity.

Ammon was born into a wealthy elite family, whose members took up hereditary priest-hoods in the local, first-ranked temples of Min/Pan in the Panopolite nome. His father Petearbeschinis (P.Ammon II 53 and 54) was married twice. The first wife, Senpasis, was

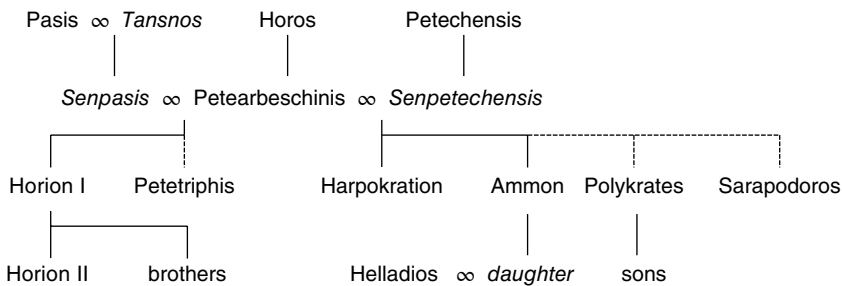


Figure 30.1 Family of Ammon *Scholasticus* (the dotted lines reflect uncertain relations; cf. van Minnen 2002b, pp. 185–187). Source: courtesy Gwen Jennes.

a priestess and daughter of the priest Pasis (P.Coll.Youtie II 73). Their son Horion I, Ammon's much older half-brother, acted as the chief prophet or *archiprophetes* by AD 299 (P.Ammon II 50). In this top priestly position, he was in charge of the temples of the region (Bülow-Jacobson 1979). The family's considerable wealth is evident from the many land declarations, property lists, receipts, and account on slaves found in the archive (Geens 2007a, pp. 231–241).

Petearbeschinis married Ammon's mother Senpetechensis by 303. The couple had, besides Ammon, at least one other son, named Harpokration. Ammon, like his father and half-brother Horion I, was probably also a priest (P.Duke inv. 198 ined.), and remained in that position until at least AD 348, when he was badly treated by several officials and was dragged to Alexandria in his "holy cloths" (P.Ammon II 47). By that time, however, he had also become a *scholasticus*, a kind of lawyer (P.Ammon II 27, 29, 30, 31, 38; van Minnen 2002b, pp. 177, 193, n. 65). He consistently calls himself *scholasticus*, never priest, emphasizing his rhetorical and philosophical skills (Geens 2007a, p. 266). Ammon's sophisticated education is likewise apparent from P.Ammon I 3, an impressive letter spanning six columns, in which he shows off his impeccable Greek (van Minnen 2002b, pp. 188–195). Harpokration, Ammon's brother, was even more successful, focusing more on speech than on writing. Starting as a public sophist in Panopolis, he built up an international career, traveling to Rome, Greece, and Constantinople as an imperial panegyrist and *curator* and *procurator*: "special envoys to straighten out cities in financial trouble" (van Minnen 2002b, p. 184; see also P.Ammon II 40 and 41; Geens 2007a, p. 273; see also Box 6.1).

Ammon's nephew Horion II was supposed to enter into the *propheteia* after his father's death. Although it was his hereditary right, the *archiereus* refused his appointment because he was an orphan. Ammon had already paid the necessary fee, but still the *archiereus* refused. He therefore tried to get the money back, but instead of paying, the high priest started threatening Ammon and Horion II. Harpokration stepped in to help his nephew. He promised to get Horion II appointed with the help of the emperor and on the basis of an imperial rescript by Diocletian, which restricted appointment to direct descendants (P.Ammon I 3 and 4). Whether Horion II was ever appointed to the *propheteia* remains unknown.

Ammon often refers to the "gods" (in plural). The only god he mentions by name is Agathos Daimon (the equivalent of the Egyptian deity Shai; P.Ammon II 37, 41, and 46), while the city's main deities, Min/Pan, Isis, Horus, and Triphis, are not heard of. Other references are more generalizing, for instance, "he is dear to the eternal gods" (P.Ammon I 3, col. iii, l. 16).

Whereas the older generations of the family served as priests, both Ammon and Harpokration turned their attention to worldly offices. In order to secure their wealth and privileges, they adapted to a changing world, which was turning away from the traditional religion. This shift to a broader Hellenistic culture (Feder 2005) is also obvious from their names. While the older generation all had genuine Egyptian names, such as Horos and Petearbeschinis, those of the younger generations are Greek derivations based on Egyptian gods, such as Horion and Harpokration. Their grammar is Greek, while the gods mentioned are typical of Egypt (van Minnen 2002b, pp. 185–186; Jennes 2013, pp. 148–150).

30.5 Monastic Life: The Rules of Pachomius

Pachomius was born at the end of the third century AD, and was therefore a contemporary of Ammon and his brothers. Originally from a pagan family, he converted to Christianity after experiencing charity by Christians. He is often seen as the founder of coenobitic monasticism, although the evolution from eremitism to coenobitism was gradual (Rousseau 1999; on the different types of monasticism and the Pachomian federation, see Chapter 29). He founded the first monastery in the village of Tabennesi, probably around AD 323. When the number of monks outgrew its capacity, additional monasteries were founded in the region of Diospolis Parva and Panopolis. Two communities were reserved for women (see Chapter 22).

In order to make things run smoothly and help the monks live a solitary life in the middle of a community, Pachomius set up rules of conduct. Some rules relate to liturgy, while others contain guidelines for work and life: about 20 or more monks' cells were grouped in "houses"; after the morning prayer, the day's work was distributed. The monks enjoyed two meals a day, in silence. Their evenings were partly taken up in learning by heart passages from the scripture, listening to the catechesis of Pachomius and other superiors, and discussing the catechesis of their house president (Rousseau 1999).

Some of the monastery's rules are handed down in Hieronymus' Latin translation from Greek (AD 404; Boon 1932). Only a small part of the Sahidic (a Coptic dialect) text (Lefort 1956) – the original language of the rules – survives, and it is uncertain whether this is an original or a Coptic translation from a Greek version. How far these rules reflect the situation in the period Pachomius was still alive, we do not know, as the written text is but a stage in their development, reached more than a generation after his death (Rousseau 1999, pp. 48–53; Baumeister 1990).

We end this chapter by providing some excerpts from Pachomius' rules as they survived in the Coptic text, thus giving the reader some idea of the dos and don'ts in a Pachomian monastery. The first set of rules obviously wants to prevent homosexuality and to protect the monks' privacy, while the second shows that books were precious and popular among the monks, who could borrow them; every evening, the "second" of each house had to collect them and return them to their place: a wall niche for books and other valuables.

No one shall spread something out on his bed, unless it is a mat (§ 88). No one shall enter the cell of his neighbor, unless he has knocked first (§ 89). No one shall put ointment on a man when he is ill, or bathe him, if he was not given the order (§ 93). No one shall speak to his comrades in the dark (§ 94) ... No one shall take the hand of his friend, or anything else of him, but you shall leave a cubit between the two of you (§ 95). No one shall shave his head without permission of the house president and no one shall shave another man if he has not been ordered to do so, and no man shall shave another man while they are seated (§ 97). No one shall receive an object from another man, without permission of the house president (§102). No one shall mount a mule with two people and being naked ... (§109).

No one shall leave his book open when he goes to the meeting place for prayer or the refectory (§100). The books of the (wall) niche, the "second" shall collect them each day in the evening, and shall return them to their own niche. (Lefort 1956, 1, pp. 30–36, and French translation in 1956, 2, pp. 30–37)

FURTHER READING

Further witnesses of religious life can be found in the following archives: temple of Narmouthis (TM Arch 234, 536, 534), temple of Pathyris (485), temple of Soknopaiou Nesos (236), temple library of Tebtynis (537), the undertakers of Hawara (145 and 359), the choachytes-priests (50, 364), self-dedications to Anubis (13) and Soknebtynis (214), the Praktor Milon (141), and Nephros (150). For additional information on the Fayum archives, see Vandorpe et al. (2015).

PART VII

CREATIVE MINDS IN THEORY AND PRAXIS

CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE

Languages, Scripts, Literature, and Bridges Between Cultures

Sofía Torallas Tovar and Marja Vierros

31.1 Languages, Scripts, and Dialects

The linguistic situation of Greco-Roman Egypt was characterized by a new ruling-class language, Greek, becoming the language of administration and government. An influx of immigrants also spoke it. However, Egyptian remained the mother tongue of the majority of the population. Other languages, including Aramaic, Edomite, Pehlevi, and Latin, were also used in different regions and time periods, and for different functions. Our ability to track down what languages were spoken is limited by the survival of the written evidence, and is closely connected to the question of literacy.

The number of different scripts was even greater than the number of different languages. Egyptian itself was written in four different scripts throughout its history, overlapping with each other in genre, time, and language form (Figure 31.1). The Hieroglyphic script was the most ancient way Egyptian was written, but was itself highly adaptive. In fact, the Hieroglyphic system developed quite drastically in the Ptolemaic and Roman Periods: the number of signs increased to several thousands from c. 1000 during the Old Kingdom and c. 750 in the Middle Kingdom. The new symbols presented new phonological values, and there were also cryptographic tendencies and orthographic puns (Loprieno 1995, pp. 20–21); this was no doubt possible because other scripts were available for writing everyday documents. The Hieratic script had been developed as a cursive version of Hieroglyphs starting from around 2600 BC, and it was still used in religious texts in the Hellenistic Period.

The main documentary script for Egyptian in the later period was Demotic, a more cursive script than Hieratic. Demotic was developed in the seventh century BC, originally for administrative purposes, but gradually expanding toward the areas of literature and



Figure 31.1 Development of 11 signs in Hieroglyphic, Hieratic, and Demotic Egyptian. Col. 1. Hieroglyphs c. 1700 BC. Cols. 2–3. Hieroglyphs written with a pen c. 1700 BC. Col. 4. Hieratic literary script c. 1700 BC. Col. 5. Hieratic administrative script c. 1700 BC. Col. 6. Hieratic literary script c. 1200 BC. Col. 7. Hieratic administrative script c. 1000 BC. Col. 8. Demotic c. 500 BC. Col. 9. Demotic c. 300 BC. Source: Cols. 1–4 after Fischer, in Caminos and Fischer (1976, p. 41); cols. 5–9 after Vleeming (1985, p. 15).

religion. In the Roman Period, it was no longer an acknowledged script for administrative documents and contracts (Depauw 2003), although we do find Demotic tax receipts written on ostraca in the first century AD. The last piece of evidence for Demotic writing (in the temple of Philae) dates to the fifth century AD.

Although the reasons for the demise of the Demotic script are still under discussion (Stadler 2008; see also Chapter 12), it is clear that the Egyptian language no longer had an easily accessible written medium for everyday purposes by the Early Roman Period. Using the Greek alphabet to write the Egyptian language was one option – this had been explored sporadically already in the Hellenistic Period (when Egyptian names were transcribed into Greek script in Greek documents; we can consider them a preliminary phase for Coptic, and some longer texts, too, may be considered as Pre-Old Coptic), but it was only with the diminishing use of Demotic script that it gained the space it needed to develop.

In the phase called Old Coptic, different variations were tried out. The ostraca from Narmouthis (Medinet Madi) present an interesting phase from the second century AD, in which Greek and Demotic scripts were used together, with Greek words in Greek script occasionally occurring in the middle of Egyptian. Greek nouns could receive Demotic articles and Greek verbs a Demotic auxiliary, a feature reflecting later Coptic usage (Pernigotti 1984; Rutherford 2010). The Coptic script was standardized around the

second century AD (Torallas Tovar 2010a; Choat 2012). Despite the fact that the Coptic alphabet was based on the Greek one, the style of writing Greek and Coptic could differ significantly even in the same hand (Fournet 2009; Clackson 2010).

Coptic was the last script of the Egyptian language, but it was the first to represent the vowels in detail. At this point, we begin to see the differences between regional dialects, because the vowels were now written out and different versions of the alphabets were used. Sahidic was the most prominent dialect originating from Upper Egypt, while the Bohairic dialect from Lower Egypt continued to be used as the liturgical language by the Coptic Church after spoken Coptic had disappeared. The additional six to eight symbols for sounds not present in Greek, borrowed from Demotic, varied depending on the dialect. However, as always when dealing with written material from scribal cultures, we must be cautious interpreting this as evidence for spoken features, since it could merely represent regional scribal and orthographic habits. The direction of writing changed to follow the Greek one, from left to right instead of right to left as used in Demotic and Hieratic (Hieroglyphs could be written both ways, as well as from top to bottom).

The Greek alphabet also showed different local variants before the Hellenistic Period; some examples are preserved in Egypt from the Saite Period, such as in the votive inscriptions in ceramic ware from Naucratis (Bernand 1970; Möller 2000) and the soldier inscriptions from the statue of Ramesses II in Abu Simbel (Meiggs and Lewis 1969, no. 7). However, when we come to the Hellenistic Period, the Greek alphabet becomes more or less standardized across different regions (of course, the epigraphic alphabet was not exactly the same as the uncials used for writing Greek literature on papyri, let alone the more cursive forms used in documentary papyri and ostraca). The Greek dialects are represented only in the very early texts from Egypt already mentioned, and, for example, in the Ionic dialect in the “Curse of Artemisia” (UPZ I 1, late fourth century BC) (Clarysse 1998). Very soon, the “standard” or *koine*-Greek (an Ionicized form of the Attic dialect) spread through the Greek papyri in Egypt.

31.2 Evidence of Multilingualism

The question of how many speakers the languages of Egypt had is difficult to answer, because we again have to rely on written sources. This immediately leaves the many illiterate speakers outside our ken. In the Egyptian tradition, literacy was restricted to a small elite of priests and scribes. Literacy in Greek was from the outset somewhat more widespread. However, in early Ptolemaic Egypt, the administration still functioned in Demotic, since not enough people literate in Greek were available for the needs of bureaucracy. The Egyptian scribal class was the basis on which the Greek administrative personnel were trained. It took some 30 years from the beginning of the Greek monarchy in Egypt to build up an all-Greek administration: we see the rise of Greek papyrological documentation in the 270s BC. The speakers of Egyptian definitely outnumbered the speakers of Greek, but a bilingual class was formed from the Egyptians learning Greek and (probably in lesser number) the Greeks learning Egyptian. This bilingual layer of society maintained relatively good standard in its Greek, but we get occasional slips of the pen that reveal some native elements in this second language (L2) (see later).

Still many questions are unexplored as regards the role of the (native) scribes in the development of the administrative *koine*-Greek in Egypt; for example, how much Egyptian influence is there in the language or in the administrative phraseology? These questions are related to literacy, to who used the service of scribes and in which particular tasks. Highly educated Greeks could write their own documents, but they often employed scribes for a large number of tasks. Scribal officials served the state but also wrote for illiterates. What happens to a language when most writing is performed by a scribal class that is using its L2?

When Egypt became a province of Rome, the language situation did not change significantly from that of the Hellenistic Period. Latin did not gain much ground in everyday documentation. Our evidence for its use in Egypt is meager and scattered. Latin was employed by a minority (Rochette 1997; Adams 2003): Roman top officials and a small group of Roman immigrants. The setting is often military, but it does not necessarily indicate military texts: we mostly have soldiers' private letters, like the archive of Claudius Tiberianus from the second century AD, which contains letters written by Terentianus in Alexandria to his "father" Tiberianus in Karanis, sometimes in Greek and sometimes in Latin. According to recent views, Tiberianus was not in fact Terentianus' real father, and Greek was Terentianus' native tongue (see the discussion in Strassi 2008, pp. 107–126).

Oddly enough, Latin documentary papyri are more abundant from the first to the third century AD than in Late Antiquity, despite the increasing "Romanization" of the Eastern provinces. Latin was the language of law, but Greek was gaining ground in that area as well (e.g. Theodosius II ordered wills to be made in Greek, and the Novellas of Justinian were written in that language). By curious contrast, we find an increase in the rise of Latin literary texts in papyri in the third to fifth centuries, and a much higher frequency of Latin loan words in the Greek of the papyri from the fourth to the sixth century (Filos 2010, p. 238). This may be explained by the birth of a new class of civil and military officials and lawyers who needed to learn Latin (Fournet 2009; see also Chapter 5).

Thus, in the Roman Period, the use of Greek in administration was pervasive. The Egyptian language of this phase, Coptic, appears mostly to have been limited to private (letters, private legal texts; see Chapter 12) and religious (translation of Christian texts) uses. Coptic would gain ground from Greek in the administration only after the Arab conquest (before Arabic definitively took over; see Sijpesteijn 2009).

Via Coptic, we see the results of language contact. In particular, the influence of Greek in Egyptian surfaces only in the Roman Period, when Coptic reveals deeply integrated contact features. The earlier phase of Egyptian, Demotic, had been kept almost pure from Greek influence, at least in its written form. This was partly for ideological reasons and partly because the literate class prized a high standard of writing as a sign of education. Exceptions are a small number of technical Greek loan words such as *Hwrmys* for Greek *Rhomaïos*, "Roman," used in Demotic documents (Clarysse 2013a) and medical handbooks. It is likely that Demotic developed gradually at all levels toward the form it would later display in Coptic, but this development is not preserved in our sources (Stadler 2008). Coptic may also be replete with Greek vocabulary because its creation was a process in which a bilingual, Greek-speaking Egyptian Christian elite, whose literacy was based on the Greek text of the Bible, were the main agents (Fournet 2009; Almond 2011). The impact of Greek on Egyptian, as evident in the Coptic language, is the most broadly and densely

attested case of language contact in Antiquity (4500 loan words in all parts of speech and semantic fields testify to that).

The evidence is not without interpretation problems, however. Translations from Greek are the basis of our knowledge of the earliest Coptic texts. Here, the strong influence of the original-language version often has the effect of introducing terms into the target language that are not necessarily adapted or naturalized loan words, but which remained in the text and were transmitted, and thus had to be understood somehow by the reader. As the Bible was the main reading in Christian circles, biblical terms often passed on to vernacular literary production. But few of these Greek terms were natural to the Egyptian language. Some entered early enough to acquire an Egyptian garb, both phonetically and morphologically (e.g. Sahidic 𐩥𐩺𐩨𐩣𐩪 (*chawchal*) from Greek ἄγκυρα (*ankyra*), or Bohairic 𐩧𐩺𐩨𐩣𐩪 (*binadj*) from Greek πίναξ (*pinax*); Böhlig 1953, p. 80). Others conveyed Christian concepts that were typically expressed in the Greek language, and were thus adopted in Coptic. Frequently, translators used Greek words even when they had a vernacular equivalent, perhaps for the sake of Hellenizing the text. Often enough, one finds these Greek words inserted side by side with their native counterpart (e.g. 𐩧𐩺𐩨𐩣𐩪 𐩺𐩨𐩣𐩪 (*palin on*, from Greek πάλιν + Coptic 𐩺𐩨𐩣𐩪), “again”; 𐩥𐩺𐩨𐩣𐩪 𐩥𐩺𐩨𐩣𐩪 (*china dje*, from Gr. ἵνα + Cp. 𐩥𐩺𐩨𐩣𐩪), “in order that”). Perhaps Greek words were used in order to obtain a “Greek coloring” of the text.

Greek loan words in Coptic documentary texts (Förster 2002) do not have these problems of interpretation. One may assume that the main purpose of these texts was to be as clear as possible. The Greek legal, economic, or administrative terminology was used in documents produced both in Greek and in Coptic. In the latter, it was left untranslated in order to avoid misunderstandings.

31.3 Multilingual Documents

Society in Hellenistic as well as in Roman Egypt was clearly multilingual at certain levels, but this is variably reflected in documentary sources. We have some bilingual and trilingual inscriptions and papyri. The inscriptions are usually priestly decrees, such as the Rosetta Stone, which records the coronation of Ptolemy V in Memphis in 196 BC. The Hieroglyphic version is placed at the top, followed by the same text in Demotic in the middle, and then the same again in Greek at the bottom. It has been suggested by Clarysse (2000) that the native Egyptian bilingual priests drew the texts of these inscriptions first in Greek, following formulaic language known in Greek honorary inscriptions, then translated it into the two forms of Egyptian. This tradition does not seem to have continued into the Roman Period: only an early Roman trilingual dedication from the reign of Augustus survives (12 BC, Short Texts I 163).

“Bilingual” non-literary papyri are bilingual only in the broadest sense of the word, because they usually have the main text in one language and only a short snippet relating to it in the other (e.g. a tax receipt or docket summarizing the contents of the contract *vel sim.*). The bi- and multilingual archives and dossiers are extremely important for researchers of multilingualism. They contain documents written in different languages, often by a limited group of people. An archive provides a context in which the language choice and use can be studied with – when we are lucky – knowledge of the linguistic skills, education, and family relations of the user.

Some papyrus archives clearly evidence these language-contact situations and phenomena (e.g. Clarysse 2010a; Clackson 2010). The archives offer rich material for linguistic analysis, but only some have been performed to date. The largest early Ptolemaic archive, that of Zenon (see Chapter 17), presents a heterogeneous group of writers, whose linguistic competences Trevor Evans (2012a, b) has divided into four main categories. First, there is a group to which Zenon and his peers belong, who have their own style and clearly a high education. The second group writes morphosyntactically good Greek, but their spelling reveals contemporary phonological changes; thus, their education is not very advanced, but they are likely native Greek speakers. The third and fourth groups present native Egyptian writers, the former having better education (their spelling follows the standard and their Greek morphology and syntax are more or less in order), the latter struggling both in spelling and in syntax (compare the slow and professional writers mentioned in Chapter 24).

Obtaining clear evidence of bilingual individuals requires detailed analysis on both the social context and the texts themselves. For example, the brothers Ptolemaios and Apollonios, sons of Glaukias, spent time as so-called recluses (*katochoi*) in the Serapeum temple area at Memphis (mid-second century BC). They left behind Greek documentation, including letters and descriptions of dreams (see Chapter 30), sometimes written on the backs of literary papyri (e.g. the famous astronomical text *Ars Eudoxi*). Their father, Glaukias, had an “ethnic” designation of Macedonian, but that no longer meant that he was definitely of Macedonian descent; he could have received the title by belonging to a certain military unit. However, Ptolemaios did complain in one of his many petitions to the *strategos* that he was assaulted by Egyptians “because he was Greek (*Hellen*)” (UPZ I 8). The status of Hellene, too, was dubious as an indicator of ethnic descent at that time; many groups of people gained tax exemption by claiming this social status (possibly by knowing or promoting Greek in some way; see Thompson 2001). Hence, personal names and ethnic designations do not reflect ethnic origin and do not necessarily indicate a native language (Vandorpe 2008). The *katochoi* Ptolemaios and Apollonios most likely were of Greek origin (their father was a cleruch-settler), and they were probably both bilingual, since they lived many years surrounded by Egyptians, but it is not certain at what age or how well they learned the language. Both could write Greek, and at least Apollonios may have been literate also in Egyptian. One of Apollonios’ documents even presents code-switching, where possibly Egyptian words within a Greek text are written in Greek characters (UPZ I 79) (Legras 2011; Clarysse 2010a).

As another example, bilingual archives from Upper Egypt present a situation where only some of the population needed to be bilingual. Nearly 20 bilingual family archives have been found in Pathyris, a town some 30 km from Thebes (Vandorpe and Waebens 2010a). The texts date from 174–88 BC, a politically turbulent time period when a Hellenizing agenda of the Ptolemies meant that more Greek-speaking institutions were being set up, such as garrisons, banks, granaries, and notarial offices. The Greek notaries, *agoranomoi*, who wrote most of the surviving texts, had both Greek and Egyptian names; they were apparently bilingual native Egyptians, belonging to the local priestly elite, who used their Greek names when working as Greek officials. Some of the documents in the family archives are written in Greek and others in Demotic, but that does not mean that the community was bilingual as a whole; in fact, relatively few people were able to write Greek in

the area. Language choice depended mainly on legislation, practicality, and traditions. After 145 BC, Demotic documents needed to be registered in Greek in order to be valid, but the Greek sale and loan documents written by the *agoranomoi* were immediately registered by the signature of the notary. Since the notaries were bilingual, there was no need for the contracting parties to be able to speak Greek in order to have a Greek document drawn up and registered straight away.

A thorough analysis of the Greek of these notaries (Vierros 2012) shows that certain structures of the first language (L1) integrated into the L2 structures. Hermias, a notary of the later generation, had more orthographic errors than his predecessors, who had mastered standard administrative orthography very well. Agreement of morphological cases, a feature typical to Greek but alien to Egyptian, was often difficult, and Hermias found it especially so. He used a creative strategy of “phrase initial inflection” to get around it, inflecting only the first element of a noun phrase to the required case and leaving the rest of the nouns in the nominative case. There are also clear examples of a syntactic L1 structure transferring to L2 in the relative clauses of his texts (e.g. P.Grenf. II 32.9–10), a mistake due to a particular usage of the Egyptian relative converter. It seems that Hermias’ Greek presents a learner’s interlanguage.

Interestingly, we still have some Demotic-Greek documentary archives from late Ptolemaic and early Roman Soknopaiou Nesos in the Fayum (Schentuleit 2007, 2009; Schentuleit and Vittmann 2009), even though Demotic script was no longer used in all text types in the Roman Period. The indigenous script was getting more complicated, and was known by fewer and fewer scribes (see also Stadler 2008 for the modern scholars’ tendency to publish “easier” Demotic documents from the Ptolemaic Period).

For the Roman Period, we have some evidence of Greek-Latin bilingualism, such as the previously mentioned archive of Claudius Terentianus. But as Demotic was no longer used in everyday life, it is not until the fourth century AD, when Coptic gained a firmer foothold, that we find further evidence of Egyptian-Greek archives. These often come from a Christian milieu, such as the Kellis archives from the Dakhla Oasis, which present layers of Latin and Syriac in addition to Greek and Coptic. A famous archive from sixth-century Aphrodito presents us the bilingual Dioskoros, who wrote and worked as a notary in both Greek and Coptic. He was the recipient of a Greek education, and he had a library of his own, including a codex of the comedy writer Menander (LDAB 2745). He wrote Greek poems, influenced by Greek masters. Language choice in Late Antique Egypt seems to be diglossic: Greek was the more formal administrative language, which everyone needed to know to some extent, while Coptic was the informal home language (see Clackson’s article (2010) on Coptic-Greek archives; for the Dioskoros archive, see Fournet 2008a and Chapter 25, including Box 25.1).

31.4 Schools, Literacy, and Bilingualism

Although Greek and Egyptian shared the land and the population, the literary production of these two languages followed separate paths for centuries. It is true that there were points of contact and mutual influences in topics and genres, as well as translations. Examples include the Greek versions of Demotic literary works, such as the Legend of the Eye of the

Sun (Feder 2013), the Prophecy of the Potter (Koenen 2002), and the Dream of Nectanebo (Gauger 2002). While it is tempting to think that the Hellenized population had an interest in these works, the audience for these translations is in fact not clear. But this separate literary development can be understood as a consequence of separate social developments, including schooling: Egyptian writing emanated from temples – although it is not clear which part of the temple was devoted to teaching, or whether there were specific temple schools – while the teaching of Greek was linked to schools (Maehler 1983, pp. 192–193, 196–197; Criboire 2001, pp. 21–23; for the later period and Greek Coptic education, see Bucking 2012). Greek education – *paideia*, including language, literary traditions, and the values they represented – played a fundamental role in maintaining the Greek identity, as a sort of continuity with the idealized Classical past, and in solidarity with other Greeks in the Roman East (Benaissa 2012). At the same time, as we have already pointed out, while the use of Greek was promoted by its pervasiveness in the administration, and it was learnt extensively as both an L1 and an L2, the use of Demotic was banned from the administration in the first century and progressively restricted to the temples and the religious sphere (Bagnall 1993a, p. 237; Depauw 2012; Stadler 2008). This had an effect on the literary production and the mutual isolation of the two cultural worlds, as we will see.

It should be stressed that instruction in Greek in schools was not limited to the Greek population in the *metropoleis*; it also extended to the Egyptian population, even in the *chora* (Criboire 2001, p. 22; see Chapter 24). In the Ptolemaic Period, learning Greek became a necessity for the natives in order to find space in the upper reaches of the economy. Egyptians learning Greek often attained a high level of proficiency, and thus many documents produced by them cannot be distinguished from documents by native speakers, since one cannot identify divergences from the correct language (see earlier). The signs that would betray an Egyptian scribe are usually orthographic mistakes that show an alternative pronunciation influenced by the mother tongue, or morphological and syntactic mistakes due to a defective knowledge of the language (see earlier). Occasionally, in the Early Ptolemaic Period, we may identify an Egyptian scribe by the use of the brush instead of the calamus-pen: the brush was traditional in Egypt, while the calamus was later brought in by the Greeks (Clarysse 1993; Tait 1988; Sosin and Manning 2003).

One of the earliest direct pieces of evidence of Egyptians learning Greek is an ostrakon from Thebes from the Roman Period (O.Deiss. 83), where a pupil wrote his Egyptian name, Kametis, while making his first steps in writing the Greek alphabet; another amusing example, although contested by Gallo (1997; O.Narm.Dem. II 96), is the ostrakon from Narmouthis, in which the scribe writes in Demotic, “I will not write the Greek letters,” and adds in Greek, “I am stubborn” (Bresciani et al. 1983, no. 5). This ostrakon belongs to a rich hoard of school material preserved across the ostraca from Medinet Madi (Narmouthis) from the second–third century, found in a temple consecrated to a goddess. The texts – written by Egyptian scribes – are in Demotic and Greek, and attest to a bilingual education (Donadoni 1955; Bresciani and Pintaudi 1987; Gallo 1989; Pintaudi and Sijpesteijn 1989; Pernigotti 1999; for the temple archive, see Vandorpe et al. 2015).

From the Early Ptolemaic Period, we have a well-preserved Greek schoolbook (Guéraud and Jouguet 1938). It has usually been taken as evidence of monolingual Greek teaching, but in fact we cannot exclude the possibility that native would-be scribes made use of such books, too (compare the modern-language immersion-teaching techniques).

The opposite case – that of learning Egyptian among the population of Greek origin – is rare, but not absent. An example is a mid-second-century BC letter in Greek, addressed by a woman to a son or husband, to congratulate him for having learned to write in Egyptian characters (UPZ I 148).

In the Roman Period, bi- and trilingual school texts, word lists, and conversation manuals surface (Kramer 1983, 2001; Dickey 2012). We have some Greek-Coptic school materials from the third and fourth centuries AD (Hasitzka 1990). The so-called *Hermeneumata* conversation manuals are in Greek and Latin (Flammini 2004), and we also have at least one in Greek-Latin-Coptic; they were probably mainly used by Greek and Coptic speakers to learn Latin, which was needed in the civil, military, and law offices in Late Antiquity. The desire of Greek speakers to learn Latin is apparently evidenced also in a papyrus where the letters of a Greek alphabet are written in Latin script in two different hands dated to the fifth or sixth century AD. According to the editors Clarysse and Rochette (2005), this papyrus was written by people who were practiced in writing Greek and were learning the Latin characters (non-Latin letters, like *eta* and *theta*, are present, but written as *e* with a horizontal bar above it and *th*, respectively).

The higher Hellenistic education had its nucleus in Alexandria, in the “Mouseion,” Royal Library and other libraries. As we shall see, this city became the birthplace of literary criticism, literature, and science.

31.5 The Library of Alexandria and Egyptian Temples

31.5.1 *Literary Production in Greek and Demotic*

As the largest center of scholarship in the ancient world, the Library of Alexandria flourished in the third century BC, and played a key role in the transmission and canonization of ancient literature. From this point of view, its foundation, and that of the great Mouseion, was perhaps the most striking development in the history of literary criticism. They became a center for textual criticism and exegesis based on literary, historical, biographical, and linguistic scholarship. Literary production (Alexandrianism) and scholarship were closely interconnected. We will refer first to the philological developments.

Philitas of Cos is the first to be described as a poet and philologist (critic) (Strabo 14.657); he was a model for the “new poets” of Alexandria, including Callimachus and Theocritus. The first head of the newly founded Library was Zenodotus (c. 325–270 BC), who worked mainly on the texts of Homer and the lyrics. His works are now almost completely lost, except for indirect references. He was followed by Apollonius Rhodius (c. 295–215 BC), who is more famous for his literary works – as was his master, Callimachus (c. 305–240 BC), who, although he does not seem to have been a librarian, compiled the *Pinakes*, a 120-book catalogue of authors and their works. After Apollonius, Eratosthenes (c. 280–194 BC) was librarian, although again he was more known for his scientific works. Aristophanes of Byzantium, the fourth librarian (c. 257–180 BC), can be considered the founder of Alexandrian scholarship, being editor of poetic texts, lexicographer, inventor of the Greek accents as we know them, and author of the introductions to many plays.

Perhaps the greatest of all was Aristarchus of Samothrace (c. 216–145 BC), who as an editor wrote commentaries on all types of texts and made large contributions to Homeric philology. After his death, and the complicated succession to the throne of Ptolemy VIII, many scholars fled Alexandria, and Alexandrian learning dispersed. The disciples of Aristarchus established themselves in other cities, such as Pergamon, and on the island of Rhodes (Pfeiffer 1968; Kennedy and Innes 1990; Dickey 2007; but see also Horster 2011).

The production of literary works in the Hellenistic world was closely linked to this new interest in philological enterprises. The access to copies and a thorough analysis of Archaic and Classical literary works conveyed a specific imprint to the new literature produced in the environment of the Mouseion and the Library. The challenge of the past, now more present than ever, did not intimidate the Hellenistic authors, who innovated on the basis of ancient models and transferred and transformed archaic genres into modern analogues (Morrison 2010; e.g. Callimachus' *Iambi*, Apollonius' epic in the *Argonautica*, the reflections of Pindar in Theocritus' *Idylls*, etc.). It must also be said that most of this Hellenistic literature is completely lost to us (e.g. all tragedy and oratory).

While this literary production was not much concerned with the surrounding society, there were in fact a few reflections of the multilingual and multicultural milieu that served as a cradle for its production. At the other end of the spectrum, there was an independent production of Demotic literature. While there are undoubtedly cases of cross-pollination (on translations of Egyptian literature into Greek, see earlier), these traditions remained primarily independent. We may assume that the royal court took no interest in Demotic literature, the audience being mainly the native priesthood: the literate Egyptian elite (Tait 1996). This is definitely true in the Roman Period, when all literary texts come from papyrus deposits near temples or the houses of priests. Egyptian literature seems to have been collected for the last time in the temple library of the Fayum village of Tebtynis, dating for the major part to the first and second centuries AD. Apart from about 100 cultic works and several texts dealing with divination, the Tebtynis library gathered narratives on pharaohs of the past and on mythological subjects such as the creation of the primeval ocean. One papyrus is a real encyclopedia of stars, rivers, and towns, counting more than 100 columns (P.Carlsberg II 1 = LDAB 56092; for the archive, see Vandorpe et al. 2015). The Tebtynis library shows the close connection between Egyptian religion, science, and literature.

An overview of the Demotic literary production is difficult to assemble (Tait 1996; Quack 2009c; Dieleman and Moyer 2010; Hoffmann 2012a), since most of the texts are known only fragmentarily, and many are lost in their original production and preserved only through their translations into Greek (see earlier). Moreover, the knowledge we have of Demotic production depends greatly on the evolution of scholarship and the edition of new texts, many of which remain unknown. In general, it can be said that Demotic literary production ran parallel to but independent of Greek literary production, but with a few elements of cross-influence, as is also the case in the Greek literary production of the period. Most of the texts written in Demotic in Greco-Roman times are prose, while the examples of verse are difficult to assess: wisdom literature written in stichs is not necessarily versified, while a poem about a degenerate harper (Thissen 1992) presents verses divided into two hemistichs by red dots, which probably contain some kind of rhythm or assonance.

The known texts belonging to the category of belles-lettres have in common complicated narrative structures, often embedding one or more stories into a narrative frame. These include the cycle of Inaros and Petubastis, the tales of Setne, the stories of Petese (or Peteesis), stories around Nectanebo, the myth of the Eye of the Sun, wisdom literature (Insinger and Onchsheshonchqy), the book of Thoth, works on the importance of priestly knowledge, and interesting prophetic texts such as the Oracle of the Lamb, the Oracle of the Potter, and the more complicated Demotic Chronicle (see also Chapter 28). The parallels with Greek literature, and even Indian or wisdom literature, are remarkable. For example, some of the stories appearing in the Petese narratives find a parallel in Herodotus (2.111), and the whole structure of the work – including 70 stories told by animals – can be compared to the Indian Śukasaptati (“Seventy Tales of the Parrot”; Hoffmann 2012a) (see also Box 31.1 on the role of papyri in the transmission of literature).

Box 31.1 “I Will Tattoo on Your Head....” New Ancient Books.

by *Katelinj Vanderpe*

On a papyrus recycled from mummy cartonnage, M. Huys discovered an unknown poem, probably from Hermesianax (320–250 BC), in which the Hellenistic poet threatens to tattoo his opponent with various mythological figures, among them the centaur Eurytion (killed by Heracles), the Tantalus rock, and the Calydonian boar. Each tattoo is described at length (P.Brux.Gr. II 22, LDAB 1116); for example: “I will tattoo on your head a big and ruthless stone, the one that is also hung up in the nether world over the head of Tantalus, because of his witless language ... Tantalus did not avoid his penalty. But you, you hope to escape? May this not please the immortal gods!”

Papyrological sources from Egypt (and elsewhere) have brought to light numerous texts for all genres and periods of Greek literature (c. 8500 copies), including several new pieces. For Latin literature (c. 200 copies), new discoveries are rare, but sometimes spectacular. Demotic literature, undoubtedly often based on older models, is almost exclusively preserved via the papyrological writing medium (c. 650 copies), while a large part of the Coptic literature (c. 1850 copies) also survives in medieval manuscripts (LDAB; Renner 2009; the section on “New Literary Texts” in the P.Oxy. volumes).

Selection of Greek poetry extant only on papyrus

The “Catalogue of Women” attributed to Hesiod	Stories about heroines of Greek mythology and their descendants, e.g. Electra daughter of Atlas and offspring	e.g. LDAB 1223
The “Maiden’s Song” (<i>Partheneion</i>) by Alcman	Hymn to be sung by a girls’ choir; notes in the margins of the papyrus show that Alcman’s poetry needed explication	e.g. LDAB 179
New Sappho poems	One of the two recovered poems is about the sea-going trader Charaxos and a Larichos, possibly Sappho’s brothers	LDAB 10253

Parts of new tragedies by Euripides	e.g. the Hypsipyle play about a princess who became enslaved; part of the <i>hypothesis</i> , an abstract that summarizes the plot, is also extant	e.g. LDAB 925, 937, 957
Work of Menander, representative of the Athenian New Comedy	Part of the “ <i>Sicyonians</i> ” e.g. found on a papyrus reused for a mummy cartonnage	LDAB 2738
600 new verses of the Macedonian epigrammatist Posidippus	Anthology of epigrams on a papyrus roll compiled only a few decades following Posidippus’ death (third century BC)	LDAB 3852
The “ <i>Persians</i> ” by Timotheus of Miletus	Possibly the oldest piece of Greek literature on papyrus, buried with the owner in a tomb near Abusir’s pyramid (350–300 BC)	LDAB 4123

Selection of Greek prose extant only on papyrus

“Constitution of the Athenians” by Aristotle	Four papyrus rolls, originally used for farm accounts, to which the Constitution and comments on other literary works were added	LDAB 391
Work of the Greek geographer Artemidorus of Ephesus	Long roll with a mix of geographical texts, a map of Spain, and sketches of human body parts and of real and imaginary animals	LDAB 7132
Greek translation of Augustus’ funeral speech on Agrippa (12 BC)	A small fragment preserved on a Fayum papyrus	LDAB 428
Philosophical texts of Philodemus and other Epicureans; also some fragments of Epicurus	Preserved on more than 1800 papyri found in a private library in Herculaneum (possibly of Julius Caesar’s father-in-law) and carbonized by the eruption of Vesuvius in AD 79	e.g. LDAB 3555

Selection of other texts

Prophecy of the lamb of Pharaoh Bocchoris (Demotic)	Manuscript of AD 4 in the tradition of native Egyptian propaganda, the original title of which is “The Curse that Re put on Egypt from Year 6 of Pharaoh Bocchoris” (714 BC)	e.g. LDAB 48888
Latin poetry of Virgil’s friend Cornelius Gallus, the father of the Latin love elegy	Gallus was Egypt’s first Roman governor; papyrus found in Qasr Ibrim in Lower Nubia	LDAB 574
Early-Christian apocryphal literature (Greek and Coptic)	e.g. the Gospel of Peter and the Gnostic Gospel of Thomas (with sayings of Jesus); a codex with e.g. quotations from Homer’s <i>Odyssey</i> and Thomas’ gospel has been found near Nag Hammadi, probably buried when Bishop Athanasius imposed a strict canon of Christian scriptures	e.g. LDAB 1088, 107742
Syriac New Testament	Syriac manuscripts of the New Testament on parchment, e.g. from the monastery of St. Mary Deipara (Wadi El-Natrun, sixth century AD)	e.g. LDAB 115518

31.6 Bridges Between Cultures

While it is true that most of the intellectual activity of the Library and the Mouseion was concerned with Greek literature, there was at the beginning of the Ptolemaic Period a new interest in the surrounding world: a new world that had enlarged the Greek territory after Alexander's conquests. This new (or renewed) interest would attract foreign scholars and would catalyze the translation of works into Greek for storage in the Library, which had the aspiration of containing all the knowledge of the world.

Most information about the Library, including the dates of its foundation and destruction, and the number of volumes it contained, is a matter of speculation (or "dreams," as Bagnall 2002 puts it). Even the initiatives attributed to Ptolemy II regarding translations of foreign works into Greek are not proven. But it is clear that these translations did occur, and that they probably belonged to a cultural trend under the auspices or patronage of the king.

When talking about "translation" – in its wide sense – in Ptolemaic Alexandria, one cannot neglect the translation of Septuagint (Rajak 2009). The Letter of Aristeas (Pelletier 1962) attests – with all due caveats about its interpretation – to the process of translation of the Torah into the Greek language. This was destined to the abundant Jewish population, not only of Alexandria, but of different parts of the country. It also attests to the support of the king for this enterprise: although it is not clear whether the Aristeas text provides a reliable story, such a huge enterprise of translation was most probably sponsored by the king. The Jews in Hellenistic Egypt were deeply Hellenized, but lived according to their ancestral laws – as much as they could within the construct of peoples that was Ptolemaic Egypt. The Torah of Moses was at one and the same time the history of humanity, of the family of Abraham, and of the Jewish people, and also their civil and religious laws. It would become the "law of the Jews" in the Greek version, and as Méléze Modrzejewski (1995) claims, the fact that Septuagint had absolutely no literary influence in Greek literature of the time suggests that it was conceived and treated as a legal text.

In this line, Méléze Modrzejewski (1995) compares the project of translating the Jewish Law into Greek to that of translating the Demotic Hermopolis "codex" or Case Book, a juridical manual for Egyptian priests-judges (Mattha 1975; Donker van Heel 1990; see also Chapter 12). The Greek translation of the Demotic Case Book shows that the manual was still used by (the partly Hellenized) Egyptian priests in Roman times. This parallel brings us into a society where different ethnic groups had the right to rule themselves according to their "civic law": Greeks, Egyptians, and Jews. Both the mentioned texts belonged to the judiciary system of third-century BC Egypt. We can imagine that the Hellenized Jewish community needed the translated Torah to serve for public reading at the synagogue, as a kind of Greek Targum, but also to make the Law accessible to those charged with enforcing it. That being the case, the theory that the translation was impelled by the king might be seen as part of the political program to maintain peaceful coexistence among the different ethnic groups.

Another enterprise can also be compared to the Septuagint and the Demotic Case Book, although it does not fit well with the legal explanation proposed by Méléze-Modrzejewski: that of Manetho's History of Egypt. Manetho was a priest at Heliopolis, active under the reigns of Ptolemy I and II (Verbrugghe and Wickersham 1996; see also

Chapter 32). He belonged to a literate elite of Egyptian priests, well connected to the court of the Ptolemies. He acted as a cultural mediator in the foundation and formulation of the cult of Sarapis, an intermediary between the native priesthood and the new power. Without going into the question of literary dependence on Greek literature (Moyer 2011c, p. 38), it is true that Manetho's work is the first Egyptian narrative of the country's own history written in the Greek language. Without being formally dependent on Greek historiography, the work is critical of Herodotus' *Histories*, proving knowledge of Greek literary texts. It was "an indigenous attempt both to make explicit the proper historical role of the Egyptian pharaoh, and also to teach the Ptolemies and other Greeks at court to read Egyptian history in an Egyptian fashion" (Moyer 2011c, p. 141).

More bridges were built in the semi- or paraliterary domain of magical, religious, and medical texts (Chapter 28). In Egyptian culture, magic was an inherent part of religion, even once the country was Christianized. Several magical handbooks have been found, including spells, invocations, hymns (e.g. to the Pantokrator), and medical recipes, often bilingual in nature (Greek with Demotic, Hieratic, and/or Old Coptic) and dating to the third and later centuries (e.g. LDAB 5669).

Eventually, Greek and Egyptian literary enterprises would grow toward one another, thanks to the success of Christianity, the Bible, and monasticism. Much of Coptic literature was translated from Greek (and in a few cases from Syriac), with a strong focus on liturgical, biblical, and related texts (including Manichean and Gnostic writings; see Chapter 29). The Coptic Old Testament, for instance, is a translation of the (Greek) Septuagint. Exceptions, like some Coptic poetry, legends, and tales, as well as medical and mathematical texts, mainly date from the period after the Arab conquest (Depuydt 2010; Sidarus 2013). Coptic was thus in origin mainly a vehicle for the new religious movements and their ideas. Egyptians in Late Antique Egypt who wanted to write poetry or prose preferred Greek even if their L1 was Egyptian (see Chapters 19 and 25).

A shift in the book format occurs alongside the linguistic and cultural developments just mentioned. The codex form, from which our book form developed, has been generally related to Christian milieus. The earliest attestations, however, come from the first century AD – not necessarily from Christian contexts, but rather containing legal and documentary uses (Bagnall 2009a). In the centuries that follow, the codex overtakes the place of the roll for literary texts. With the change in form, a gradual change of material from papyrus to parchment also occurs. Christianity seems to have had some role in impelling the new format. Christian texts were predominantly written in the more practical codex form, whereas non-Christian literature continued to be written on rolls for some time. Only in the fourth century does the codex become more popular as a medium for pagan literature (Johnson 2009, pp. 265–267).

31.7 Conclusion

The languages, scripts, and literature of Egypt in Greco-Roman times must be seen as a vivid landscape, where the colors of different languages and literary traditions sometimes stay pure and sometimes mix with one another to form new tones. The surviving evidence only gives us occasional glimpses into a much wider reality: the spoken language

in particular remains in the shadows, but also the existing mono- and multilingual documentation has not yet been fully exploited in terms of providing answers to how the multilingual society worked. It is the task of Greek, Demotic, and Coptic scholars to work together toward the same goal: to cast some light upon the shadows.

FURTHER READING

Bagnall (2009b) provides thorough introductions to several subject matters, especially chapters 11–12 on books and literature (Johnson and Renner) and chapters 17–19 on languages (Thompson, Fournet, and Sijpesteijn). Evans and Obbink (2010) offer case studies on linguistic change and diversity, as well as on language contact as evidenced in the papyrological sources. Leiwo et al. (2012) collect articles dealing with variation in both Greek and Latin in a wider geographical perspective. Papaconstantinou (2010) bundles different views on the multilingual environment in Egypt. On Egyptian, Greek, and Latin literature in general, see the contributions in the *Blackwell Companion to Ancient Egypt* (Late Period, Ryholt 2010; Coptic, Depuydt 2010; Greek, Morrison 2010) and the *Oxford Handbook of Roman Egypt* (Hieratic and Demotic, Hoffmann 2012a; Coptic, Choat 2012; Greek, Benaissa 2012; Latin, Evans 2012c; language use, Depauw 2012).

CHAPTER THIRTY-TWO

Encounters Between Greek and Egyptian Science

Sydney H. Aufrère and Marie-Hélène Marganne

32.1 Early Encounters

When Pharaoh Psammetichus I (664–610 BC) saw off the threat of Assyrian control, bringing Carian and Ionian hoplites on to Egyptian soil, he was not to know that the land of the Nile was sealing a solid pact with Hellenism. This was to last, originally, down to the reign of Nectanebo II (360–343 BC), Egypt's final native ruler. It then continued, radiating out from the new capital of Alexandria, under the Macedonian and Ptolemaic dynasties and the Roman emperor-pharaohs. For, together with the hoplites from Asia Minor came merchants and scholars, who under the protection of the Saite pharaohs disembarked to discover in Lower Egypt a profusion of technological and architectural wonders.

Still earlier, when Homer wanted to refer to the “Black Land” (*Km.t/Kemet*), as the Egyptians called the fertile Nile Delta and Valley, he chose the name *Aigyptos* for his Greek readers (Aufrère 2007a). For, *Aigyptos*, *Hout-ka-Ptah* (“Home of the Soul of Ptah”), was the fine name of the great structures of Memphis, in whose shadow Odysseus' contemporaries under Amenhotep and Thutmosis docked their high-prowed ships. While some Achaeans practiced piracy on the Delta coast (Brûlé 1978; de Souza 1999), others sailed up the Canopic (or Heracleotic) branch of the Nile. In Memphis, within the settlement walls crowned with battlements and decorated with ears that recalled the god who listens to prayers, was the home of Ptah, the demiurge-god revered by the city's inhabitants. This was the deity of craftsmen and intellectuals; his were powers closely bound up with the birth of the cosmos. It is therefore not at all surprising that in the Greek tradition, Memphis and Thebes, the later capital of pharaonic Egypt, were linked with the source of Egyptian wisdom, from which the Greeks came to drink.

If the banks of *Aigyptos* – for the name was also applied to the River Nile – were synonymous with magic, drugs, plants, and perfumes, in Homer’s work (and the same may be said of the Bible) no connection is to be found with the presence of pyramids. It is only through authors such as Hecataeus of Miletus and, later, Herodotus – in effect, works of literary fiction that owed much to earlier writings – that Egypt is given a history and an architecture formed and reformed through the written and oral tradition, and later corrected at the hand of Manetho of Sebennytos. Manetho traced the architectural form of the pyramids back to the reign of Unephes in the First Dynasty, and the use of stone for building to that of Tosorthros (Djoser) (on Tosorthros-Djoser, see Aufrère 2004b); the building of the Great Pyramid – that architectural feat of the Giza plateau – he attributed to Souphis (Egyptian Khufu or Khuf), who is the pharaoh Cheops in Herodotus (2.124) (Manetho, *Aegyptiaca*, frags. 14–16; Waddell 1980, pp. 44–49). In criticism of Herodotus, Manetho revised Egyptian history according to priestly traditions (Aufrère 2005b) and thus contributed – albeit with little effect, given the loss of much of his work – to the correction of a number of earlier accepted views (see, however, Quack 2013). We may note here that it was in Manetho’s work, echoing an earlier tradition, that the composition of the Sacred Book, containing the full extent of Egyptian priestly knowledge, was ascribed to Souphis (Cheops) (Aufrère 2011).

Manetho, who may be considered the ideal of a cultured individual, in homage to the native tradition, extolled the antiquity of Egyptian wisdom and of the pharaonic dynasties as guarantors of its efficacy. This was the true refrain of the Egyptian clergy; in their hands was the formation of future sacred scribes (*hierogrammateis*, Derchain 1987), and equally of those Greeks who came to Egypt to “learn” from the lips of the Egyptian clergy. Thus, one may savor the full flavor of irony in the passage of Plato’s *Timaeus* (22b) where the author describes the meeting (after 594 BC) between Solon of Athens and the priests of Sais, who boast to their interlocutor of their ancestral “learning hoary with age,” which could not but make its mark on Greek thought, still in its infancy. Postulated twice as true by Socrates, their exchange of thoughts reported by Critias’ great-grandfather must be treated with the same caution as the encounter reported by Herodotus between the geographer Hecataeus of Miletus and the priests from Thebes. The *Timaeus*, however, presents an interesting analogy between the goddess Athena, who embodied war and learning, and the goddess Neith, the Egyptian androgynous demiurge represented as her model. For, the priests of Sais were attempting to persuade Solon that Athens was a colony of Sais, with the implication that Athenian culture – that is, scientific culture – derived from that of Sais. Here, we find the full philosophical debate on the origin of knowledge, since the Egypt of Plato is also the home of Theuth (Thoth): in the *Phaedrus* (274C–275C), Socrates, as speaker, reports that, in the reign of the Theban king Thamus, Thoth (Aufrère 2016a, pp. 212–216) – the god of the region of Sais, to whom is dedicated the ibis, Egypt’s bird *par excellence* (Aufrère 2005c) – invented numbers, mathematics, geometry, astronomy, the game of backgammon, dice, and writing; this latter he invented to aid Egyptians in their grasp of learning by relieving their memory. Thamus, however, criticizes all these different inventions and, as a critique from within the country, claims that as a result of Thoth’s invention of writing, and in the absence of any true guidance, Egyptians will become ignorant. Behind such a critique, there lurk, in opposition, knowledge dependent on literacy and knowledge dependent on memory and orality. There may be a

caricatural element in this opposition, where Egyptian priestly (written) wisdom is placed face-to-face with Greek *philosophia*. Nevertheless, this raises the question of possible interfaces between Egyptian and Greek scientific thought. (The Greek term *philosophia* does not just mean “philosophy”; on the Greek, i.e. Plutarch’s, understanding of “Egyptian philosophy,” see Aufrère 2016a.)

How far apart were myth and reality? In other words, did Egyptian and Greek science influence one another? We certainly need to take account of the relationship between their respective criteria of scientific validity and the different levels of language and writing accessible to each (even if the location and nature of the encounters that permitted these exchanges remain a matter of speculation). For example, access to the different forms of native language and writing – spoken Egyptian, the Hieroglyphic, Hieratic, and Demotic scripts – was the product of a specific training. Even if a few Greeks are said to have penetrated this linguistic fortress, most of those who would have been interested to enter were kept away; they depended on a state of knowledge transmitted in something approximating their own language, if not by bilingual Egyptians, at least by those few other Greeks who had access to Egyptian priestly knowledge and thus served as interpreters in its transmission, at least in theory – “in theory” because of the difficulties inherent in gaining physical access to those priests who acted as the holders of priestly knowledge. This left only the *pastophoroi*-priests, whose status allowed them to maintain contact with the general public. The fact that foreigners lacked access to the bearers of Egyptian sacred knowledge (Aufrère 2016a) requires us to be somewhat skeptical with regard to claims that there was any real dialogue between Egyptian priests and Greek travelers.

As a result, this chapter, with its accompanying bibliographical guidance, is concerned less with the presentation of a comparative picture of the sciences in their respective Greek and Egyptian settings and far more with assessing the feasibility of encounters that are regularly presented as the norm.

32.2 From the Actual Practice of the Egyptian Land Survey to Greek Geometry

We must return to the claims of Greek authors as to the existence of Egyptian geometry. According to Herodotus (2.109), it was the hero Sesostriis, a composite figure with features derived from several Egyptian rulers of the Middle and New Kingdoms (Obsomer 1989), who was responsible for dividing the country into territorial units of similar size. This same tradition needs reconsideration in light of the account of Diodorus Siculus (1.54.73), whereby a hero of the same type, this time carrying the name of Sesoosis, was responsible for dividing Egypt into nomes – that is to say, into administrative-religious units. Acts such as these might preserve an echo of the redefinition of space in the reign of the second king of the Twelfth Dynasty, Sesostriis I (1956–1911 BC). After a period of troubles during which the Egyptian administration had been neglected, Sesostriis I made an administrative reform of the country; he restored the nome boundaries on the basis of cadastral records aiming to avoid conflict between neighbors. Several records survive, especially in the form of boundary stones detailing the measurements and limits of a nome (Habachi 1975), and

of decisions made during Sesostris' reign and that of his predecessor, Amenemhat I (Newberry 1893, pl. xxvi, cols. 29–52). Furthermore, the “White Chapel” – an emblematic monument of Sesostris' rule – provides a real geographical portrait of Egypt. This chapel preserved the official measurements of the country (106 *itrw/iterou* or *schoinoi*, i.e. 106×10.5 km or about 1113 km from north to south), corroborating those reported by Herodotus and Diodorus Siculus (Lacau and Chevrier 1956, pp. 242–243). On the outer plinth are recorded details for the 42 nomes of Upper and Lower Egypt: their measurements and the number of cubits and hand-breaths that had to be deducted from the “regular” *aroura* (a unit of 100 square cubits = *stzt/setjat*) in order to calculate the area of the “local” one, each of which differed from that of the neighboring nome; hence, tax-related calculations became more complex (Lacau and Chevrier 1956, pp. 214–237).

It is clear that men were at work who were skilled in geometry, or at least in land measurement: expert surveyors who came under the protection of Khnum of Elephantine, god of the Nile flood (Barguet 1953; Sauneron 1983, pp. 68–70). These land surveyors had found many ways to calculate surface areas and thus, depending on the quality of the land (Gasse 1988, p. 185), the yield of individual plots. The plots were apparently formed of varying regular and less regular shapes – of rectangles or trapezia (rectangular, regular, and irregular ones) – placed all along the Nile and its canals so as to benefit from the flood and the resulting irrigation (Gasse 1988, p. 188, figure).

On the basis of the testimony of earlier authors, Diogenes Laertius brought together what is known of Pythagoras: after this scholar got himself recommended by Polycrates of Samos to Pharaoh Amasis, he learned Egyptian and then – during a stay in Egypt that, according to Antiphon, lasted for 22 years – gained access to the Egyptian temple sanctuaries in Memphis and Thebes, where he could read the sacred books. In this way, Pythagoras brought to perfection the geometry, the principles (*archai*) of whose elements (*stoicheia*) (Diogenes Laertius 8.11) were originally discovered by Moeris, the pharaoh so named by Herodotus and Diodorus Siculus (probably referring to Amenemhat III (1831–1786 BC), also known as Marres or Lamarres). Some authors, including Diodorus Siculus (1.98.2) and Heron of Alexandria (*Definitiones* 136.1), concluded that Pythagoras acquired his knowledge of geometry from the Egyptians. This common view may well prove to have been the case; see, for instance, the information preserved in the Rhind, Moscow, and Kahun papyri, which demonstrates complex methods of calculation indispensable to the practice of Egyptian architecture, for which the geometry of triangles is essential. This indeed prefigures Pythagoras' theorem that in a right-angled triangle the square on the hypotenuse (*c*) is equal to the sum of the square on the other two sides, (*a*) and (*b*): $a^2 + b^2 = c^2$. Pythagoras' theorems, however, do not derive directly from the measuring practices of either land surveyors or architects. In their formulation, they are true products of the Greek genius.

Greeks clearly used Egyptian survey methods, as did Eratosthenes (276–194 BC) when he employed the angle of the curvature of the earth between Syene and Alexandria to calculate the earth's circumference. There is some lack of clarity in this case, since the distance between Egypt's southern border at Elephantine/Syene and the foot of the Delta was traditionally measured as 106 *schoinoi* (see earlier); Eratosthenes' experiment could have been aimed at simply checking the traditional view using Egyptian measurement methods.

Diogenes Laertius (1.24) recounts that the philosopher and mathematician Thales of Miletus (625–547 BC) learned geometry from the Egyptians, and that Thales was responsible for a revolutionary form of calculation. The Egyptians were well able to calculate the height of medium-sized monuments empirically, by hanging measuring cords from their top. Such an operation was, however, impossible for a monument as high as a pyramid. The story goes that when Pharaoh Amasis challenged Thales to calculate the height of the Great Pyramid, he did so by devising the famous theorem that bears his name. Given these examples, it is clear that the Greeks came to surpass the empirical methods of the Egyptians, formulating mathematical models simpler than those employed by their distinguished predecessors in the valley of the Nile.

32.3 Astronomy and Astrology

Despite their claims to the contrary, it is difficult to assert today that the Egyptians were not dependent on Babylonian astronomy and astrology (Fowden 1986, pp. 67–68). Nevertheless, we must recognize that the scholars of the Nile Valley were early on concerned with the movement of celestial bodies (Neugebauer and Parker 1960–1969). Their observations were needed to calculate the difference between the “wandering” and the “fixed” years, even though the Egyptians could employ a fixed reference for the beginning of the year, namely the heliacal rising of Sirius (i.e. the dogstar Sothis, alpha *Canis majoris* or alpha *CMa*) (von Bomhard 1999). The silhouette of Sothis appears in front of the stars displayed in rank on the astronomical ceiling of the Ramesseum, behind the constellation of Orion, who appears to bid him farewell (Desroches-Noblecourt 1980, esp. figure 17 in front of p. 21).

Given this intellectual primacy, the Greek tradition granted a key role to the magician-astrologer Nectanebo, portrayed in the *Alexander Romance* (Aufrère 2000). His historic prototype was Nectanebo II or Nekthorhebet, the last native ruler, whose reputation was that of magician and astrologer (Matthey 2012). From the first century BC, with Egyptians unwilling to be outclassed by Greek science, the growth of which was based on the integration of the Babylonian legacy of astronomy and astrology, there emerged cultural “types” or legendary figures that seemed somehow to embody the primacy of Egyptian astrology: King Nechepsos or Nechepso and a man called Petosiris. In the Greek astrological tradition, these two were recognized as “the Egyptians” (*hoi Aigyptioi*) or “the elders” (*hoi palaioi*). As the author of apotropaic formulae against disease (Fournet 2000; for the fragment of a medical handbook with prescriptions, perhaps from Book XIV of Nechepsos, see Andorlini and Marcone 1999, pp. 337–340; 2003), Nechepsos is recorded in Greek papyri as an authority in the field of astrology (Heilen 2011; Fuentes and Pablo 2005). A second-century AD Demotic papyrus (P.CtYBR inv. 422 verso + P.Lund inv. 2058 verso) ascribes his detailed knowledge to the discovery of a work written by Imhotep (Greek Imuthes), the scholar-architect whose name, in the Egyptian tradition, evokes the very origins of building in stone (Lauer 1985). Imhotep further embodied the tradition of priestly learning according to the *Temple Manual*, traces of which survive in a Greek version (Quack 2003b, 2004). Nechepsos’ name appears in still a further manual of calendrical omens (P.Vindob. inv. D 6286), a genre known from Demotic papyri in which celestial events are recorded in relation to events from

everyday life on earth (Hughes 1951). Furthermore, consideration of the narrative text recorded in P.Berlin inv. 13588 and P.Carlsberg inv. 710 recto has allowed Kim Ryholt to identify the Nechepsos of the Greek papyri as Necho II (610–595 BC), the second ruler of the Twenty-Sixth Dynasty and successor to Psammetichus I (664–610 BC). The name Nechepsos (*Nekaou-pa-chesa*) may be understood as “Necho, the scholar.” Ryholt (2011) postulates that the importance in astrological matters invested in this ruler was due to the coincidence of his accession to the throne during the impressive event of a lunar eclipse on March 22, 610 BC. Since in this way, albeit somewhat anachronistically, he became associated with Imhotep and Amenhotep son of Hapu – a further traditional character in the history of scholarship – his reputation as a learned astrologer is found in the literary tradition only after this eclipse. As for Petosiris, several sources record him as the author of astronomical treatises.

A further cultural “type” derived from a literary character, Petesis, appears in an *Astrological Dialogue* preserved on a Greek papyrus from the third century AD (P.Ryl. II 63). The text depicts Petesis with Plato, whom he is instructing in the theosophical Platonism (i.e. Neo-Platonism), giving rise to the idea that Greek philosophy – and thus Greek learning, represented in medical astrology – derived from Egyptian priestly wisdom (Pleše 2005, pp. 356–357; Quack 2002b; Hoffmann and Quack 2007, p. 168). Quack (2002b, p. 92) has drawn attention to the tradition in the Ptolemaic Period that a magician from Heliopolis named Petesis – yet another literary character – was Plato’s teacher, and to the fact that in the Ptolemaic and Early Roman Periods this Petesis, under the name Petasios, was attributed with works of science or alchemy, making him one of the 26 philosophers of science (Hoffmann and Quack 2007, pp. 167–175; Quack 2002b, pp. 75–79).

Nonetheless, apart from these legends, few real influences can be traced. Certain scholarly practices from Greek Alexandria are found in some Egyptian astronomical texts, such as the adoption of commentary-writing (*hypomnemata*) in certain Demotic sources (the term *hypomnemata* is generally used in the plural). Papyrus Carlsberg inv. 1 and 1a (AD 144), for instance, preserves a Hieratic version of *The Book of Nut* found in the Theban royal tombs, which is accompanied by a learned commentary in Demotic (P.Carlsberg 8 no. PC1 and PC1a: Von Lieven 2007, pp. 373–453; on the practice of commentary, see Aufrère 2014). This is the only learned commentary to have survived in Demotic, although the metatextual practice of drawing on textual information of a linguistic or interpretative nature in Demotic and Old Coptic is found in several papyrus texts from the temple library at Tebtynis, including those dealing with onomastic matters and priestly manuals (Osing 1998). This reminds us that in his anthology, the Greek astrologer Vettius Valens (AD 120–175) named Nechepso as its “author” (*sungraphēs*), thus showing that in the Greco-Egyptian tradition it was not only the collection of ancient texts but also the elaboration of glosses (i.e. commentaries) that was considered integral to astronomical activity. When, in the title of his now classic study, Cumont (1999) described Late Antique Egypt as the *Egypt of the Astrologers*, this in fact corresponded to reality. Nevertheless, according to Fowden (1986, p. 68), there was some real difference between the true science of the Egyptians and how it was perceived by those who termed themselves followers of Nechepsos and Petosiris: “But all that (i.e. the presentations on the walls of the roof-chapels at Dendara) must have seemed archaic to the adepts of ‘Petosiris’ and ‘Nechepso,’ who made Egypt into the astrologers’ cynosure, but only by decking her out in foreign garb.”

32.4 Between Pharmacopeia and Medicine in the Two Worlds: Creativity and Application (Pharaonic Times)

32.4.1 International Reputation of Egyptian Medicine

Historically, Egypt was famous for its drugs, unguents, and perfumes, and for the excellence of its medicine. Already in the *Odyssey* (4.229–232), Homer celebrated this land “which produces an abundance of drugs. Many compounds of these are beneficial, many others harmful, and every physician here is renowned above all other men for their skill, for they boast their descent from Paeon.” And this tradition is itself a distant echo transmitted by travelers who crossed the bar of the Canopic (or Heracleotic) branch of the Nile to put in at the port of Herakleion, known in Egyptian as Thonis (*T3-hn.t/Ta-Henet*, “The Mouth” of the “Gates to the Sea,” Yoyotte 1958, pp. 423–430, 2001). Traditionally, this was where Greek vessels went through customs (Briant and Descat 1998; Gras 1995, pp. 161–163) in order to reach the port of Naucratis (Yoyotte 1992–1994). In Homer, this trade is echoed in a local Thonite legend, according to which Polydamna, wife of the Egyptian king Thon, eponymous hero of Thonis-Herakleion, gave *pharmaka* to Helen. While Greek scholars have not concerned themselves with the origin of the word *pharmakon* (Chantraine et al. 2009, pp. 1177–1179), others have suggested that it may derive from Egyptian *pekheret-net-heqa*, “the magician’s cure,” a term still to be traced in Coptic *phakheri-en-bik* (Jonckheere 1955, p. 157, n.7; Abatte Pacha 1899). Elsewhere, in the magical tradition, Hermes-Thoth is credited with the invention of *pharmaka* (for Hermes-Thoth as the inventor of writing and/or *pharmaka*, see Pap.Graec.Mag. I: v, 249–250; Pap.Graec.Mag. II: viii, 28; Quaegebeur 1986; Aufrère 2001a, pp. 487–492).

Given Egypt’s reputation for medicine and pharmacy at the royal court (Bardinet 2018), the term could have become established through the authority granted to the corpus of medical texts, which prescribe a great variety of remedies (Bardinet 1995). The cliché of the crafty Egyptian who makes use of *pharmakon* is well established, as for instance in the Hellenistic novel of Achilles Tatius, *Leucippe and Clitophon* (4.15–16). Here, an Egyptian soldier in love with Leucippe administers her a love potion as prescribed in Egyptian magic; Clitophon employs an antidote to save his beloved (4.17), and he approaches the drug in the manner of an Egyptian herbalist-magician (Aufrère 2001b; Achilles Tatius’ novel takes place in an Egypt of fantasy, cf. Faranton 2012; on the Egyptian “trickster,” “smuggler,” “deadbeat” in the Ptolemaic Period, see Chauveau 1997, pp. 107–110, 2000b, pp. 80–82 – the Egyptian “poisoner” could be added to this list; for love potions in Egyptian magic, see the Magical papyrus London and Leiden, recto xv, 1–20).

The historian Herodotus, who visited Egypt around the middle of the fifth century BC, wrote that “it is full of physicians” and that these were specialists, some for the eyes, others for the head, for the teeth, for diseases of the stomach area, and for those diseases whose location was unsure (2.84). The picture he draws not only echoes the texts that have survived (as we shall see shortly), but also reminds us of the comments of the Christian writer Clement of Alexandria (see later). Egyptian medicine was so famous in the ancient world that from the fourteenth century BC, Egyptian physicians were sent for by the Hittites

and Mitanni, as recorded on the Bakhtan stele (Edel 1976, pp. 31–61, 125). Foreigners also traveled to the land of the Nile to consult them there, such as the Syrian prince depicted on the wall of the Theban tomb of Nebamon, “scribe and physician to the king,” during the reign of Amenhotep III (c. 1390–1352 BC) (Jonckheere 1945, 1958, p. 51, no. 43 and figure 14; Ghalioungui 1983, p. 28, no. 85 and, on the reputation of Egyptian physicians abroad, pp. 76–86).

In the sixth century BC, Persian kings were still calling on Egyptian specialists for treatment (Herodotus 3.1; an Egyptian magical stele has even been found at Susa, Abdi 2002). Foreign princes consulted Egyptian oculists, gynecologists, and medical magicians, among others (Huber 2006, p. 303, n.3). At the same time, physicians acted as diplomats and policy advisers (Burkard 1994). This further role surely explains why Darius I (522–486 BC) came to allow Udjahorresnet, chief physician in Sais and personal physician to both Darius and his predecessor, Cambyses, to recognize the effectiveness of the “House of Life,” where priestly knowledge was taught along with medical science. The physician from Sais (whose tomb was discovered at Abusir; Verner 1989) reports this fact in his biography, which survives inscribed on his statue, now in the Vatican (Posener 1936, pp. 1–26, esp. 22; Lloyd 1982; see also Godron 1986). Darius’ close involvement in the Egyptian “House of Life” is supported by Diodorus Siculus (1.96.4) and by Udjahorresnet’s statue (Posener 1936, pp. 21–24).

Given all this, what is to be made of Herodotus’ claim that a Greek physician with greater skills took over from his Egyptian colleagues at the Great King’s court? What in fact happened? In leaping from his horse, Darius I (522–485 BC) had sprained his foot, and his Egyptian physicians were unable to find a cure. Worse still, in twisting and forcing the foot, as Herodotus recounts (3.129), they aggravated the problem to the point that the king was unable to sleep for seven days. On day eight, he appealed to a Greek physician who had been enslaved, one Democedes from Croton (active c. 500 BC; Nutton 1997). Democedes “applied Greek remedies and, substituting gentler remedies for the somewhat violent treatment of the Egyptians, he allowed the king to get some sleep and then in a short time he restored him entirely to health after he had quite lost all hope of ever recovering the use of his foot” (3.130). Similarly, Democedes healed Darius’ wife (3.133–134). At the end of the sixth century BC, this story – the first with a nationalistic twist – argues (in a manner that reads almost like a parody) for a relative decline in the favor enjoyed by Egyptian physicians in the East when confronted by a Greek medicine now at full strength and considered as more effective (Grmek 1983; thanks to Democedes, the Egyptian physicians escaped the threat of impalement, cf. Herodotus 3.132). A “relative decline” only since the story, which serves a political end, is presented in too paradigmatic a form to express an unequivocal truth.

32.4.2 *Medical Papyri and their Updates*

According to Egyptian tradition, skills in medicine developed very early – in anatomy, according to Manetho, as far back as the reign of Athothis, physician-pharaoh of the Second Thinite Dynasty (*Aegyptiaca*, frags 6–8, Waddell 1980, pp. 28–33). Tosorthos (Djoser), who constructed the step pyramid at Saqqara, apparently enjoyed a similar reputation as a physician (frags. 11–12; Waddell 1980, pp. 40–45), although he probably owed this to

Imhotep (Greek Imuthes), who was his pyramid's architect and who also possessed medical skills (Aufrère 2004a; see earlier). Yet, despite these earlier examples, the great Egyptian medical papyri date only from the Middle and New Kingdoms. There are traces to be found here and there of a medical tradition that dates back to the reign of Cheops or of Pepi II, but these should be treated with caution (for Cheops, see Bardinet 1995, pp. 486–487; the late tradition of a learned Cheops (or Souphis), responsible for editing the Sacred Book, is quite often recounted, as in Manetho, *Aegyptiaca*, frags. 14–16; Waddell 1980, pp. 44–49; for Pepi II, see Sauneron 1989, section 42c). They belong to a tradition, which re-emerged in the Saite Period, in which the inspiration of the past was used to justify a renaissance (cf. Aufrère 1998a). The fact remains however that in certain areas, Egyptian medical expertise displayed an effectiveness beyond the bounds of mere tradition.

Certain documents, like the Edwin Smith Surgical Papyrus (c. 1600 BC) (Bardinet 1995, pp. 493–517), show that knowledge might be kept up to date by means of high-level commentaries – far earlier than those made to the astronomical Carlsberg Papyrus inv. 1 and 1a (AD 144, see earlier). So, there is reason to believe that traditional medical knowledge was kept alive by the practitioners themselves in order that it could be available for use in a delicate field of surgery. This metatextualization was rather a late phenomenon, which appears in technical fields (in the case of liturgical prescriptions like that for *kyphi*, cf. Lüchtrath 1999; Aufrère 2005a, pp. 248–251; the Goldsmiths' Workshop at Dendara, cf. Derchain 1990, pp. 233–236). But does the Edwin Smith Papyrus represent the exception, or the tip of an iceberg? In any case, it is clear that the skills of Egyptian physicians, however good or bad they were, differed fundamentally from those of Greek medicine, which was seen to be an activity characterized by reason and doctrine.

32.4.3 *Medical Practice and Ritual Acts*

As with religion and magic (*heka*), which until the time of the Roman conquest enjoyed a close to scientific status in the Nile Valley (without of course being truly scientific; Ritner 1995, pp. 3355–3358), the practice of Egyptian medicine necessarily involved the accompaniment of ritual acts (Bardinet 1995, pp. 39–59). We may note the profound influence on medical concepts and their expression of, on the one hand, beliefs that exploit analogies (treatment of the patient in a myth ~ treatment of the patient by the physician; Bardinet 1995, pp. 39–138; Guilhou 1995) and, on the other, observations made on actual corpses during the process of mummification (Bardinet 1995, pp. 74–76; Pezin and Janot 1995). For this reason, the boundaries between physician, priest, and embalmer might appear somewhat blurred to an outside view. *Pastophoroi*-priests, however, who seem not to have been subject to the strict rules of purity that governed more senior priests, were the only members of the clergy authorized to enter into contact with the public and with foreigners; they were also the only ones allowed to practice medical magic, which generates impurity.

32.4.4 *External Influences?*

Was there development in Egyptian medicine over the centuries? Was it at all open to foreign influence, especially that from Greece? At first glance, the response of Antiquity was negative, as evidenced by the Greek historian Diodorus Siculus, who in the first

century BC reported (1.82.3) that, in the treatment of their patients, Egyptian practitioners were forbidden, on pain of death, to depart from the written rules laid down in earlier times by a number of established physicians (Aufrère 2002). Modern commentators, like the physician and egyptologist Nunn (1996, p. 206), have concluded that there is no evidence for any major change in either the form or the content of classical Egyptian medicine between the Old Kingdom and the end of the Twenty-Sixth Dynasty (i.e. between 2600 and 525 BC). However, a judgment based on just a few papyri rather than on the full corpus (which we do not possess) can only be a distorted one. On the other hand, these views may reflect the good opinion that the Egyptians had of themselves and the value they wished to ascribe to their own history and, therefore, to their knowledge of medicine. Various clues, indeed, suggest that Egyptian medicine was more open to external influences than has been claimed, and that it did borrow from outside and did evolve, especially from the New Kingdom on (Valbelle 1990, pp. 262–265). For example, Papyrus Hearst 170 (c. 1500–1450 BC) (Bardinet 1995, p. 397) refers to the “Canaanite ailment” – probably leprosy (Bardinet 1988); Papyrus London 32 (c. 1350–1300 BC) (Bardinet 1995, p. 487) preserves a recipe against the same disease, which apparently came from Crete (Stolk-Coops 1958, p. 66); and Papyrus Ebers 28 (c. 1550–1500 BC) mentions “Cretan beans” (Bardinet 1995, p. 255; Warren 1995, p. 7), as well as recording that “another remedy for both eyes was revealed by an inhabitant of the Asian city of Byblos” (Bardinet 1988, p. 35). Furthermore, over time a number of medicinal plants from Palestine or elsewhere were imported or naturalized in Egypt (Germer 1993, pp. 69–80; Meeks 1993). Contacts with the Greek world intensified at the end of Greece’s Geometric Period. Under Psammetichus I (664–610 BC), Ionian mercenaries were settled in camps in the Delta region, and later, on the invitation of Amasis, in Memphis too. Naucratis, which was founded around the same time by Miletus, played an important role in exchanges between the two peoples. In 525 BC, the conquest of Egypt by Cambyses brought further change, resulting in borrowings from Egypt to Persia and the Middle East (Hoffmann 2012b). In terms of medical matters, the opening up of Egypt to foreign influence surely reached a peak in the Greco-Roman Period, when Hellenized Egyptian priests combined traditional Egyptian medicine (as found in the Hieratic and Demotic medical papyri) with Greek medicine (Marganne 1996a). A similar process can be observed in the Greco-Egyptian magical papyri like those of Paris, London, and Leiden, which derive from a still broader Mediterranean corpus (see later).

32.5 Between Pharmacopeia and Medicine in the Two Worlds: Creativity and Application (Greco-Roman Times)

32.5.1 *Alexandrian Medicine*

The reputation of Alexandrian medicine dates less than 50 years after the conquest of Egypt by Alexander the Great (332 BC) and the foundation of Alexandria as a typically Greek city. In fact, it is with the accession of Ptolemy I Soter (305–282 BC) and Ptolemy II Philadelphus (284–246 BC), with their foundation of cultural institutions such as the

Mouseion and Library, that an influx of scholars to Alexandria may be charted as a result of royal sponsorship. Among these were well-known physicians, such as Herophilus of Chalcedon (c. 325–255 BC), who may be considered the founder of scientific anatomy; Erasistratus of Ceos, his contemporary, with a particular reputation in anatomy and physiology; his brother Cleophantus; Strato, student of Erasistratus; and the anatomist Eudemus. Then there were Mnemon of Side, who, at the request of Ptolemy III Euergetes, brought from his homeland a copy of Hippocrates, *Epidemiae* III, furnished with notes; Apollonius of Memphis, a follower of Erasistratus and student of Strato; and Andreas of Carystus, a follower of Herophilus, who served as physician to Ptolemy IV Philopator (222–204 BC) and was killed in the king's tent during the Battle of Raphia in 217 BC (Fraser 1972, 1, pp. 338–376, 2, pp. 495–551; von Staden 1994; Littman 1996; Marganne 2002). Medicine in Alexandria is recognized as having reached a high point that remained unsurpassed for a long time. This owed much to the discoveries of Herophilus and Erasistratus in anatomy and physiology as a result of human dissection (indeed, even vivisection), a practice that cannot have lasted more than 50 years in the city.

The teachings of these two practitioners attracted students who, in turn, created schools. The Herophilean Philinus of Cos became founder of the Empiricist school in the mid-third century BC. Resulting from a better understanding of anatomy, progress in mechanics and pneumatics allowed surgeons in Alexandria to experiment with new methods (Celsus, *De Medicina* VII, preamble, 2–3) although these were not always without controversy (Michler 1968; Marganne 1994, 1998). The *organikoi*, who treated fractures and dislocations with devices that they developed themselves or else borrowed from engineers and then perfected, were criticized for causing suffering to the patient. Their methods included use of the so-called “Alexandrian position” (apparently a sitting position) (P.Lond.Lit. 166; with P.Cairo Mich. II 10; P.Ryl. III 529). Facilitated by the expansion of trade, access to further drugs and aromatic herbs gave impetus to the development of pharmacology. Experimental research, including in toxicology, sometimes fitted well and sometimes was at odds with respect for the tradition represented by Hippocratic medicine and its humoral system (where imbalance of one of a person's four bodily fluids, called humors, has an impact on his or her health and temperament). This development involved concern for the preservation and transmission of knowledge, not only through teaching but also through the written word, supported by philological activities and the libraries. It was most probably in Alexandria that, for the first time, a series of treatises was systematically put together. Even if not always authentic, these came to form the *Hippocratic Corpus*, which served as the base of the initial work of textual exegesis and commentary in the circle of Herophilus and his pupils.

The philological approach, practiced for almost a millennium, did however attract criticism, notably from the Greek historian Polybius, who traveled in Egypt sometime in the mid-second century BC (12.25.d4–e5), and from Apollonius of Citium, who denounced the Herophileans for their lack of real experience, with their instruments and their incapacity in terms of hands-on surgery (see his *De articulis* 1.3). Archibius, an Empiricist physician (first half of the first century AD), wrote that “the student should not receive his initiation far removed from the real essence of surgery; for the real essence of surgery involves empirical diagnosis and treatment; study of the subject of surgery – that is a matter for philology” (BKT 3.22–26, late first century AD). Indeed, a recently published

papyrus from Oxyrhynchos (P.Oxy. LXXIV 4972, second/early third century AD), on the back of a letter, contains a questionnaire on surgery, its divisions, and the technical terms used to designate these, which is unparalleled in the medical literature that has survived. By the sophistication it shows in its theoretical treatment of surgery, it justifies the criticism of the Empiricists, who gave priority to practice over theory.

From the Early Hellenistic Period down to the Arab conquest (AD 642), that is to say during the entire period when Greek served as the language for the administration, as for science, medical education in Alexandria was so well respected that, if they did not come from there, many physicians are reported to have studied or spent time in the city. Apollonius of Citium, who dedicated his abridged version of a Hippocratic treatise on surgery (*De articulis*) to a King Ptolemy (Ptolemy XII Auletes or his brother, who ruled Cyprus between 80 and 58 BC), received his education in Alexandria from the Empiricist physician Zopyrus. Rufus of Ephesus (late first/early second century) also spent time in Egypt, as did Soranus of Ephesus (early second century), according to the Suda (851). Attracted by the revival of anatomical research under the leadership of Marinus, Quintus, and Numisianus, Galen (AD 129–c. 216) came to study there for some five years (c. AD 153–157) (Nutton 1993; Grmek and Gourevitch 1994; Boudon-Millot 2012, pp. 68–81).

Other, less-known physicians also claimed a link with Alexandria: Dorotheos, for instance, who was buried at Tithorea on Parnassus, and on whose first-century BC tomb one may read: “Dorotheos, stranger, a scientist here lies hidden beneath the earth; a physician, he only abandoned life in his old age. In earlier times, Alexandria brought him into the world, his homeland, washed by the Nile, where he learned what he knew.” Another was Dioskoros, whose epitaph found in Milan (fourth–fifth century AD) records that “he had as his homeland divine Egypt in its entirety” (Samama 2003, pp. 153–154, no. 53, pp. 535–536, no. 495). At the end of the fourth century, following a visit to Egypt, the Roman writer Ammianus Marcellinus (22.16.18) wrote about Alexandria, his teachers there, and the disciplines that flourished in the city that “studies are so enriched on a daily basis that, even should his work itself make it clear, in place of proof to commend his knowledge of his skill it would be enough for any physician if he could say that he was trained in Alexandria” (cf. Scarborough 1969, pp. 141–142; Nutton 1972). The medical school of Alexandria was then in full glory, with Iatrosophists like Zenon of Cyprus, Ionicus of Sardis, and Magnus of Nisibis – for whom, according to Eunapius (*Vitae sophistarum*, 497–499), a special school had to be opened in Alexandria when large numbers of students flocked from overseas to benefit from his teaching (Sabbah 1985, pp. 291–292). Oribasius of Pergamon (c. AD 320–400), physician and friend of the emperor Julian, studied in Alexandria before going on to practice medicine in Asia Minor, as did Aetius of Amida, who became physician to the court of Justinian and wrote a famous medical encyclopedia around the mid-sixth century AD. Paul of Aegina too, seventh-century author of a further well-known medical encyclopedia, practiced medicine in Alexandria. In Late Antiquity, a strict method of teaching developed there, which was based on a selection of Hippocratic and especially Galenic writings, which came to be known as the Alexandrian canon. Adopted in one form or another, this canon firmly directed the evolution of medicine, as much in the Arab world as in the West, and condemned to oblivion almost everything that did not belong to it, with the exception of encyclopedias and manuals of practical medicine.

Of the many writings of the famous Alexandrian physicians, only the occasional works survive; these may be supplemented by fragments quoted in later medical literature or in Arabic works, or preserved among the 300 Greek literary papyri on medical matters that have been identified from Egypt to date. If Alexandria and the Delta, both too humid for preservation, have yielded no papyri, it is nevertheless clear that in many cases those found up-country bear the influence of Alexandrian medicine, which they probably reflect. Such is especially the case for the works of Alexandrian physicians (Herophilus, Erasistratus, the Empiricists, and so on) and for those disciplines particularly cultivated in Alexandria, such as edition and exegesis of the works of Hippocrates and Galen, surgery, ophthalmology, anatomy, gynecology, and pharmacology. The many Greek medical papyri of the Roman Period found at Oxyrhynchus, 300 km south of Alexandria, testify to the axis of scholarly exchange between that locality, Alexandria, and Rome; these include references to Asclepiades of Bithynia, Thessalus of Tralles, and the medicine of the Methodists, which was developed in the empire's capital and enjoyed a high profile under Nero (Turner 2007).

32.5.2 *Egyptian Influences on Alexandrian Medicine?*

Was Alexandrian medicine influenced by that of Egypt? A serious obstacle to this would be the language, with Egyptian scripts known to only a few Greeks. The practice of mummification may have facilitated the transgression toward dissection of the human corpse in Egypt. Through the practice of embalming, the better quality of which involved evisceration, Egypt opened up its potential to Greek physicians. Manetho reports that King Athothis (see earlier) composed a treatise on anatomy at a time when the classic form of mummification was still on the distant horizon (Manetho, *Aegyptiaca*, fr. 6; Waddell 1980, pp. 26–29). The Empiricist sect, formed in Alexandria around the middle of the third century BC, “advocate(d) a form of return to the ways of acquiring knowledge in medicine of the past” (Grmek 1997); this seems to be closer to the thinking of traditional Egyptian medicine. The belief that certain Egyptian creatures, such as the hippopotamus and ibis, were behind surgical or medical procedures may also originate in Egypt (ps.-Galen, *Introductio sive Medicus* 1.2; Hanson 1985, pp. 25–26).

Aelian presented the Egyptians as magicians and snake charmers (*De natura animalium* 6.33), a reputation present since the Pyramid Texts (Leitz 1996; Meurer 2002, pp. 269–316; Mathieu 2002, pp. 189–192; Aufrère 2015a) and confirmed for a later period by the recently published Papyrus Brooklyn inv. 47.218.138 (Goyon 2012; Aufrère 2015c). In light of this, one would expect multiple interfaces between the Egyptian and Greek lore of snakes, or ophiology (for the Greco-Roman Period, see Cumont 1999, pp. 61–62). The Egyptian ophiology is the realm of the doctor-magicians of the goddess Selkis, who was believed to have power over snakes and scorpions (von Känel 1984, pp. 163–231). The well-known ophiological Egyptian papyrus (P.Brooklyn inv. 47.218.48 and 45, re-copied in the fourth century BC), earlier published by Sauneron (1989), consists of two texts, one of which describes different types of snake (38 are named) and their bites, the other treatments for nonlethal bites (Leitz 1997; Brix 2010; Aufrère 2012). These texts are nowhere echoed in surviving Greek ophiological literature (Leitz 1997); most notably, they are not mentioned by the *Theriaca* of Nicander of Colophon, a poetical treatise of 958 hexameter lines from the second century BC (Jacques 2002). When a work

does mention snake bites from Egypt or Libya (Barbara 2012, pp. 18–25), it goes back to Greek legends involving the Nile country, especially that of Helen connected – in a version that goes beyond the text of the legend popularized by Homer – to the region of Canopus (Nicander, *Theriaca*, 282–319 (Jacques 2002, pp. 23–26); see Amigues 1990, pp. 177–198; Barbara 2009, p. 3). Beyond the eponymous myths and the etiological minutiae, this all implies the existence of points of convergence between the Egyptian doctor-magicians of Selkis and Greek physicians specializing in toxicology.

The same would seem to be indicated by the presence at the royal palace at Alexandria of a certain Harbechis, whom Derchain recognized as an “astrologer-snake charmer” contemporary with Ptolemy VI Philometor (Derchain 1989; see also, under Nectanebo II, the Selkis magician Onnophris son of Païnmou, connected to the royal family, von Känel 1980, 1984, pp. 198–201, 297–298). If one looks for details in the field of Greek medicine more or less comparable to those of the Papyrus Brooklyn – which opens up a wide range of medical magic in line with the practice of Egyptian medicine – there is nothing until the *De venenatis animalibus* of Philumenus of Alexandria (c. AD 200) (Zucker 2012). It is quite possible that Philumenus picked up something of the Egyptian tradition, purged of its components of sorcery and apotropaic magic (see e.g. Aufrère 2013).

32.5.3 *Egyptian Medicine Continued*

On the Egyptian side, the literary, papyrological, epigraphic, and archeological sources show that traditional medicine continued to be practiced. We have already seen how, according to Diodorus Siculus (1.82.3), it was on pain of death that in their treatment of the sick, Egyptian practitioners would contravene the rules established by the best physicians of far earlier times. But comments like this require further examination. If the tradition of medicine reported by Diodorus corresponded to a remote past practice, was it still relevant at the time he traveled through Egypt (60–59 BC)? Quite possibly, this was not the case. Physicians belonged to the rank of *pastophoroi*—priests who were entitled to mix with the general public. Nevertheless, they were conversant with the different Egyptian scripts, which gave them access to their art; they were moreover the ones responsible for the preservation of these texts (Aufrère 2016a, pp. 234–237). According to the Christian writer Clement of Alexandria (*Stromata* 6.4.35–37), the library of the Egyptian temples contained “forty-two hermetic books which were completely indispensable; of these, thirty-six, containing the whole of Egyptian philosophy, serve to instruct the priests mentioned above (cantor, astrologer, sacred scribe, vestment priest (*stolistes*), prophet). Six others concern *pastophoroi* and are medical books. These deal with the structure of the body and its diseases, its organs and remedies, with eye diseases and, finally, gynecology” (Aufrère n.d.–b). It would be reasonable to conclude that Clement’s source for this was Chairemon of Alexandria, a first-century author who was certainly familiar with the clergy of that city; tradition had it that he was a sacred scribe (*hierogrammateus*): a scholar in matters of priestly scientific knowledge (Aufrère 2016a, pp. 195–201, n.d.–b, sections 2.2–2.6).

In several areas of the Fayum, hundreds of papyri – both Egyptian (in Hieratic and Demotic) and Greek – have been found that can be linked to the personnel of local temples, especially those dedicated to the crocodile god Sobek/Suchos or Soknebtynis

("Sobek, Lord of Tebtynis"). The term *sampsouchon* (i.e. marjoram), which was used in pharmacology and perfume-manufacture (Dioscorides, *Materia Medica* 3.39), in fact gets its name from the Egyptian (possibly Fayumic) expression "Suchos herb" (*sem-pa-Sobek*). To be added to this dossier are the botanical glossaries preserved in the magical papyri with Greco-Demotic terms, which testify to equivalences between Greek words and their expression in Demotic (The London and Leiden Magical Papyri (Pap.Graec.Mag. II 14), aimed at a Hellenized readership, each contain a Demotic–Greek herbal glossary; cf. Betr  1988). The Demotic medical papyrus in Vienna (P.Vindob. inv. D 6257, second half of the second century AD) probably comes from the library of the temple dedicated to the crocodile god Suchos at Krokodilopolis (Arsino ) (Reymond 1976; reviews of Smith 1978 and of Devauchelle and Pezin 1978; Marganne 1996a, pp. 2723–2724; Fischer-Elfert 2007, pp. 88–89; Hoffmann and Quack 2011, p. 300). The written text dates from the second half of the second century AD, but its content, which reveals a diverse compilation of six medical texts on a variety of subjects from different dates, seems to belong to the Ptolemaic Period (third to second century BC). It contains prescriptions for all kinds of conditions, and while these reveal some parallels with major medical works of the Pharaonic Period (notably the Papyrus Ebers), at the same time they also testify to Greek influence; many of the names of plants and minerals result from the Demotic transliteration of the Greek words.

At Tebtynis, in two small underground vaults, an Italian archeological mission discovered the remains of a library that may have belonged to the sanctuary or to a priest of the crocodile god. Among the remains were "many Greek papyri, some of which form part of a medical treatise, while others are medical prescriptions" (Anti 1931, p. 391, 1932, p. 88; Andorlini 1995, pp. 7–11, with review of Marganne 1996b; on the relations between the Greek literary papyri from Tebtynis, especially the Herbal, and the local priests, see Hanson 2001; van Minnen 1998b, p. 168, n.245). The archive of the Tebtynis temple includes several hundred papyri, mostly written in Demotic, but also in Hieratic, Hieroglyphic, and Greek, many of which are still unpublished – especially those found during the excavations taken up again in the 1990s (Hoffmann 2012b; Ryholt 2013). One of the finest pieces is without doubt the illustrated Greek Herbal, which survives in some 20 fragments of the roll. Each column originally contained a polychrome illustration of a plant, with its name as a form of title above it, followed by a brief note essentially listing its medicinal properties (P.Tebt. II 679; P.Tebt.Tait 39–41; on the new papyrological finds from Tebtynis, see Hickey 2009b; for priestly material within the second-century AD Tebtynis papyri, see Osing 1998; Osing and Rosati 1998).

Other texts from the Roman Period still carry bilingual prescriptions (e.g. the Greco-Demotic ostraca Cairo OMM inv. 155 (ANRW II 37.1, p. 525, no. 128, descr.) from Narmouthis and O.Strasb. I 619, purchased at Luxor). If, however, these pieces reflect a Greek influence, or show borrowings from Greek, or at least an attempt at translation, other Demotic medical papyri of the Roman Period continue to follow the Egyptian tradition exclusively (e.g. P.Tebt.Tait 18, prescriptions, 19, medico-magical; P.Tebt.Tait 20 Ro; P.Carlsberg I, p. 58–83 (230), herbal; Tait 1991, pp. 47–92, with pls. 4–6). According to van Minnen (1998b), it is the presence of important temples and the large number of priests attached to them that probably explains the number and variety of literary texts found in the different areas of the Fayum. The priests represented the Egyptian intellectual elite: often bilingual in Egyptian and Greek, and at home with the Greek way of thinking, some of them passed for "philosophers" (care still needs to be

taken in defining the Egyptian practice of philosophy; this was rather concerned with myths constituting knowledge that we might call “scientific,” see Aufrère 2016a).

In pharmacology, many prescriptions transmitted in the Early Roman Period, by medical writers in both Greek (Heras of Cappadocia, Asclepiades the Younger, and Crito) and Latin (Celsus and Scribonius Largus), are believed to have come from Egypt (Marganne 2013), particularly from Memphis, Alexandria, and Canopus. They were either developed in temples such as that of Ptah in Memphis (the Hephaistieion) or, when they fail to record any divine name or any sign of being sacred, transmitted by the staff of these temples. The term *kyphi* (Greek *kyphi* = *kapet* < Egyptian *kap*, “to fumigate”; Fournet 1989) also has an Egyptian priestly origin (Aufrère 2005a, pp. 248–251). According to Dioscorides (*Materia medica* 1.25), this fragrance, which was pleasing to the gods and used extensively by Egyptian priests, could form a constituent element of antidotes and potions for asthmatics. Plutarch (*De Iside et Osiride* 80.383E–384C) and Galen (*De antidotis* 2.2 = 14.117–119), quoting the lines of Servilius Damocrates (active in Rome under Nero and Vespasian), provide the prescription. It was most probably Hellenized Egyptian priests who instructed the Greeks on medicines such as a *kyphi* and poultices known as “Isis,” “sacred,” or “Alexandrian,” as reported by Greek authors like Dioscorides and Plutarch, and by Latin authors like Celsus and Scribonius Largus. According to a tradition recorded in the *Onomatologos* of Hesychius of Miletus (sixth century AD), and then taken up in the *Suda* (tenth century AD), Manetho, who was reputed to have translated the Sacred Book of the Egyptians into Greek (Aufrère 2011), was the author of a work on the preparation of *kyphis* (Aufrère 2005b, pp. 26–27); the ingredients, including both solar and lunar material, are listed in Plutarch (*De Iside et Osiride* 80.383E).

In terms of archeological evidence, the relief at Kom Ombo with surgical instruments (Figure 32.1) illustrates the interdependence of mythological belief and medical science. Engraved on a wall of the temple of Sobek and Haroeris, this relief depicts the emperor Caracalla (AD 211–217) or Marcus Aurelius (AD 161–180) presenting an offering table to the god Haroeris with 47 items upon it; these include a large number of medical and surgical instruments from the Roman Period (Jean 1999, pp. 31–33, with pls. I–III). From their context, these might seem to illustrate the care and purification of the *wedjat*-eyes (healthy eyes): operations aimed at the protection of Osiris, with Horus as intermediary (Aufrère 2015b, pp. 35–37, 2016a, p. 198, n.31, n.d.–a), for Horus was at the same time physician for the eyes and protector of the parts of Osiris’ dismembered body (Marganne 2013). Greek medico-magical papyri and some intaglios further reflect the mix of Greek medicine with Egyptian religion and magic (de Haro Sanchez 2010).

32.5.4 *The Impact of Christianity*

The expansion of Christianity was clearly evident in Egypt, especially from the fourth century, probably as a result of Constantine’s edict of tolerance (AD 313). With this came copies of more and more Christian works; it did not, however, entail the disappearance of Greek literature, either the Classical models (Homer, Euripides, Menander, Isocrates, etc.) or those works, including medical texts, that met the demands of “usefulness” (*opheleia/utilitas*), so important in the Byzantine world (Marganne 2014). Remedies deriving from an Egyptian priestly origin continued to be documented in medical



Figure 32.1 Kom Ombo, Temple of Sobek and Haroeris, Emperors' Corridor with scene of surgical instruments aiding in the healing of the mythical eye of Horus. Source: Image courtesy Martina Minas-Nerpel.

treatises – including those of Oribasius (mid-fourth century), Aetius of Amida (mid-sixth century), Alexander of Tralles (second half of the sixth century), and Paul of Aegina (seventh century) – at the same time as competence in the traditional Egyptian scripts was disappearing: the last Hieroglyphic inscription was made at Philae in AD 394 (Alexander of Tralles 1.475, 1.573, 2.91, 2.299, 2.595, etc. (*kyphi*); Paul of Aegina 4.19.2, 40.3, 43.3, 45.5, 7.17.39 (*Isis*), 7.22.4, 7.22.5 (*kyphi*); Oribasius, *Collectiones medicae* 44.12.4, 4.22, 4.23 (remedy of the Epigone and of Isis); *Synopsis ad Eustathium* 3.220 (*kyphi*); Aetius of Amida 9.42.44, 11.29.64, 12.41.23, 12.41.48, 12.41.47, 15.13.26, 15.13.41, 15.13.61, 15.14.19 (*Isis*), 5.120.24, 13.116–117 (*kyphi*); since the Greek text of book 13 of Aetius is partially unedited, we have used the Latin translation of J. Cornarius, *Actii medici Graeci contractae ex veteribus medicinae tetrabiblos*, Bâle, 1542).

In writing their language, Egyptians now used the Greek alphabet, together with six to eight letters borrowed from Demotic (to form the Coptic alphabet) (Aufrère 1999; see Chapter 31). For their texts, including medical texts, they abandoned the Egyptian roll in favor of the Roman codex; from the outset, Christians adopted the codex for the Bible. Far from representing theoretical discussions, Coptic medical writings seem rather to be collections of prescriptions, and they follow the Greek rather than the Egyptian medical tradition (Richter 2016).

32.6 Interfaces in Alchemy

The word “alchemy” is thought to derive, through Arabic, from the traditional name for Egypt: *Kemet* (*Km.t*), the “Black (Land).” Its place in this discussion poses a delicate problem: since alchemy falls within the scope of the technical *Hermetica* (wisdom texts in

the form of dialogues between teacher and disciple), Fowden (1986, p. 67) writes about it as follows: “In the case of alchemy, the ancient Egyptians are known to have been interested in the origin and nature of precious stones and metals, while the Greek alchemical texts of Late Antiquity contain various allusions to Egypt and its traditions; but there is no sign of anything approaching the continuous evolution that links pharaonic to Greco-Egyptian magic.” Nevertheless, Egyptological scholars have regularly sought the origins of alchemy in texts from the Workshop of the Goldsmiths at Dendara (Daumas 1980; Derchain 1990).

On one hand, while it is the case that its texts are primarily technical in nature (Halleux 1981), scattered within the body of alchemical literature are works said to have been produced by characters with Egyptian names like Pausiris, Pebichios, Petesis, or Petasios (probably the same as the astrologer of that name) and Queen Cleopatra. Furthermore, the alchemical and hermetic tradition is full of references to Cheops/Souphis, who built the Great Pyramid and is often mentioned in Egyptian temples as being the originator of ancient texts (Aufrère 2011, pp. 330–333). To the alchemist Zosimus of Panopolis (active c. AD 300; Mertens 1995), for instance, was attributed *The True Work of Sophe, the Egyptian*, and in “Sophe” may be recognized the Souphis of Manetho (Aufrère 2011, p. 332; Berthelot 1886, p. 384; Festugière 1967, pp. 207, 209). On the other hand, it is well known that the laboratories and workshops of Egyptian temples, where perfumers and unguent workers spent long hours – sometimes more than a year – developing their preparations, had at their disposal techniques and sophisticated processes (translated texts from the Laboratory at Edfu recording such preparations are collected in Aufrère 2005a). In addition, Egyptians had a thorough knowledge of metals and precious minerals; these were essential to the gods, since in their eyes, they were divine products to be cared for both during their extraction and in working on them (Aufrère 1991, 1998b, 2007b, 2016d). Add to this a belief in the existence of a period of growth of mineral as well as vegetable products, and it is possible to make a case, beyond the single literary point of view, for a role (or influence) of Egypt in the genesis and development of alchemy.

FURTHER READING

Valuable discussions on Egyptian and Greek science in Pharaonic and Greco-Roman Periods are to be found in the volume *Savoir et pouvoir à l'époque de Ramsès II. Khâemouaset, le prince archéologue*, edited by Charron and Barbotin (2016), in Richter (2016) and von Staden (1994). The recent study of the Medical Papyrus Louvre E 32847, dating back to the reign of Amenhotep II (Bardinet 2018), shows correspondences with the Papyrus Ebers, Hearst, Smith and London, and adds to our knowledge of Egyptian medicine and magic.

CHAPTER THIRTY-THREE

New Architectural Practices and Urbanism

Bérangère Redon

33.1 Architectural and Urban Innovations from the Ptolemaic to the Byzantine Era

Egypt was a well-populated country that was urbanized long before the Greeks arrived. It was dotted with a network of towns, villages, and hamlets with a density that was hardly attested elsewhere in the Mediterranean. The level of urbanism of these localities is difficult to gauge, and the little that is known comes from only a handful of emblematic examples (such as Amarna and Tell el-Dab'a), which no doubt obscure the great variety that actually existed in the development and organization of Egyptian towns in pharaonic times (Bietak et al. 2010). Moreover, Egyptian archeology mainly focuses on large temple structures (Leclère 2008) and has, until recently, largely ignored the surrounding housing areas.

As in many other spheres of daily life, the new Greco-Macedonian dynasty of the Ptolemies brought about innovations in architectural design and urban planning. The influx of immigrants incited by the first rulers led to the foundation of numerous settlements, first among them the new capital, Alexandria, deliberately located right off the coast of the Mediterranean by Alexander himself (see Fraser 1972, which is still the standard work on the capital to this day). Following Greek and Macedonian tradition, the splendor of the Ptolemies was prominently displayed through monumental architecture in this new city (Pensabene 1993; McKenzie 2007), adorned here and there with decorative *Pharaonica* (Abd el-Fattah and Gallo 1993; Yoyotte 1998). Likewise, the Ptolemies founded harbors along the Red Sea (Cohen 2006, chapter 6; Sidebotham 2011), as well as myriad small-scale towns and villages in the Egyptian *chora*, especially in the Western Delta (on the strong Greek presence in this region, of which the remains have largely

disappeared, see Bernand 1970) and the Fayum oasis (Müller 2006; Manning 2003a, pp. 103–108).

We are best informed about the settlements in the Fayum, although the layout of this region's capital is impossible to reconstruct as it has been continuously inhabited since Antiquity (Davoli and Ahmed 2006). Several large villages have been thoroughly excavated over long periods of time, most notably the settlements situated on the fringes, which were abandoned by the end of Antiquity and preserved by the advancing desert (i.e. Bacchias, Dionysias, Karanis, Narmouthis, Philoteris, Soknopaiou Nesos, and Tebtynis; Davoli 1998, 2012). These large-scale excavations have supplied historians with a wealth of accurately dated papyrological and material evidence concerning sites where the houses are preserved (some of them were still up to two or three stories high at the beginning of the twentieth century).

Some of the Ptolemaic settlements in the Fayum show clear signs of Greek influence, especially in regard to their layout. However, many bear little resemblance to the strictly orthonormal Hippodamian plans that are considered markers of Hellenism (Müller 2006, p. 121, 2010, pp. 230–231; Davoli 2011, p. 73; Marouard 2012, p. 121). Their plans rather followed a – no doubt well-considered – layout that was centered around the main temple and its procession route, as was customary in Egyptian towns (Marouard 2008, p. 117; Davoli 2011, pp. 73–80). Moreover, despite attempts to comply with a general orientation aligned with the cardinal points, the remains clearly show that streets in these towns rarely ran along straight lines, that plots were not all the same size, and that dwellings were very diverse, as they were organized independently from one another (Marouard 2012). A typical Arsinoite house was rather compact, occupying only a small surface, but could reach from two to four stories, and included a basement, a rooftop terrace, and a courtyard at the back (Marouard 2008, p. 118). This design was inherited from the domestic architecture of the Late Period (see Marchi 2014 on these “tower houses”). It is interesting to note that the only excavated house in Philadelphia – a small Ptolemaic settlement with a royal residence and several villas belonging to the Alexandrian elite under Ptolemy II, the plan of which, reconstructed with the help of aerial photographs taken by the RAF, seems to conform to strict Hellenic urban planning – is one such tower house (Marouard 2017, p. 123).

One can only conclude that architects either were already familiar with the Egyptian environment, or were forced to adapt to it, even when building new settlements. They faced many limitations, not least when it came to available building materials. Mud-brick was the most obvious choice, especially in the Nile Valley and the oases, and its intrinsic characteristics no doubt compelled architects to use it. The Nubian vault, for example, was largely adopted, and was widely used in constructions throughout the Greco-Roman Period (Hadj-Minaglou 2007). Geographic and demographic limitations also had to be taken into account. Egypt had a large population and a vast territory, but arable or habitable land was scarce, and was, moreover, prone to flooding. Finally, the number of new settlements was probably low (e.g. Philadelphia, Dionysias, Karanis), and Greco-Macedonian settlers formed a minority, even in the Fayum, one of Egypt's most Hellenized regions (Clarysse and Thompson 2006; Fischer-Bovet 2011). The colonization of this area took place in several waves, and many Egyptians from other districts settled alongside the new Mediterranean immigrants, no doubt charged (at least partially) with land

reclamation and the (re)construction of communities commissioned by the Ptolemies (Clarysse 2007).

However, these limitations did not prevent the Greeks from introducing new institutions and buildings previously unknown in Egypt, such as the gymnasium (although there are no archeological remains from the Ptolemaic Period (except a recent discovery made at Philoteris by C. Römer, DAI Cairo), which does raise some questions; Habermann 2004). Collective baths were likewise erected in large numbers throughout the Fayum (see later). Other buildings, both public/collective (e.g. temples dedicated to Greek gods, banquet halls, hippodromes, and theaters) and private/domestic (e.g. mansions), were most likely also constructed following Greek standards, but they have left few traces among the remains (see e.g. Hadji-Minaglou 2012 on Tebtynis; Pensabene 1993, pp. 221–241 on the Classical architectural fragments found in the Fayum; see also the updated list in Davoli 2011, p. 82, n. 29). Papyri, notably those from the Zenon archive, present more clues and allow us, for example, to reconstruct the interior design of a large Greek mansion (a *prostas*-type house with women's quarters) built for Diotimos, the vice-minister of finances (*hypodioiketes*) of Ptolemy II, in Philadelphieia (see Chapter 17). This was equipped with baths with mosaic floors, and its walls were decorated with frescoes painted by a craftsman from Alexandria (Vanderborgh 1942; Nowicka 1969, p. 44 ff.; Husson 1983, p. 302 ff.). Mud-brick walls were efficiently covered and concealed with plaster, many traces of which from the Greco-Roman Period survive. At the same time, the motifs and the structural and illusionist style used to decorate them evoked grand constructions of the Greek world (see Whitehouse 2010, section 6 for a general overview; Guimier-Sorbets 2015 for the painted decoration of the Ptolemaic baths in Karnak).

However, the Ptolemaic settlements adorned with such buildings and decorations were not miniature versions of Alexandria and other cities founded by Greek colonists in the Mediterranean periphery; on the contrary, Greek architecture was easily adapted to the Egyptian environment and influences were reciprocal, resulting in hybrid settlements.

Distinct traces of this mix of influences can be found in the Mareotis region in north-western Egypt, even though stone – the usual building material of the Greeks – was readily available there. Ever since the foundation of Alexandria, the area had served as its hinterland (Pichot 2012), and the influence of Greco-Macedonian architecture is clearly visible from the beginning of the Ptolemaic Period onward. Yet Egyptian elements are also present in decorations and in the layout of settlements in this region. Take Taposiris, for instance, a town with grand houses (one of which even had a peristyle adorned with heart-shaped pillars) and a Greek-style collective bath building, which stood in the shadows of a large Egyptian temple dedicated to Osiris, and were adjacent to a necropolis housing mummified animals (Fournet and Redon 2009). Or take Plinthine, a neighboring hamlet, founded at the beginning of the Ptolemaic Period on the remains of an older site (which can perhaps be traced back to the New Kingdom; Boussac et al. 2015). The Hellenistic settlement was constructed according to a more or less organized plan, with a main road traversing the city, leading to Lake Mareotis (Boussac 2015); Adriani (1934, p. 105), who excavated there one season, uncovered houses in Greek architectural style. The necropolis consists of some 100 tombs, of which 10 are Alexandrian-style underground hypogea, but some *loculi* are decorated with Egyptian elements, as was customary in funerary practices (Boussac et al. n.d.; the same can be witnessed in Marina el-Alamein

to the west, Daszewski 1998). Moreover, even in this region under the direct influence of Alexandria, the typically Egyptian tower houses were built on the island of Marea from the third century BC onward, but in limestone (Pichot 2014).

Outside these regions with a strong Greek presence, pre-existing Egyptian villages also adopted new elements imported from the Mediterranean world. Although rare, there are more traces than the few “Classical” architectonic fragments (i.e. in a broad Greco-Roman sense) discussed by Pensabene (1993) might suggest. The presence of the army and administration (especially in larger towns) and the attraction of such novelties for the local population no doubt stimulated the construction of new buildings following Greek standards in numerous Egyptian towns and villages, in part in order to imitate the capital, but also to meet the needs of the inhabitants. Bouto, already an ancient town, counted four collective baths, which may have been in use simultaneously (Lecuyot and Redon 2014). Even Thebes, a thoroughly Egyptian city that served as the center of the large revolt at the beginning of the second century BC, was dotted with several baths in the Ptolemaic Period (Redon and Faucher 2015). One of these was magnificently decorated with mosaics and painted plaster of such quality as was otherwise found only in Alexandria and the palaces of Macedonia (Boraik et al. 2013). And while Thmouis, a village near the large religious center of Mendes in the north-eastern part of the Delta, mainly consisted of tower houses in mud-brick, an accidental find revealed beautiful mosaics in Alexandrian style (one depicting a Ptolemaic queen) that can be dated to the end of the third or the second century BC, a dynastic chapel with portraits in marble of some 10 Ptolemaic rulers, laid out meticulously in a Classical style, and Greek inscriptions that probably come from a gymnasium (Redon 2014, p. 65).

Thus, Egyptian villages and towns took on a hybrid form more or less from the beginning of the Ptolemaic Period, and continued to evolve in that direction. Roman rule did not introduce any fundamentally revolutionary changes. The architecture and urbanization of the sites in the *chora* continued to combine elements of different origins (see e.g. Hadji-Minaglou 2012 on Tebtynis). Urban environments did become denser, however: an evolution that went hand in hand with the desire to “monumentalize” the *metropoleis* of the nomes (Bowman and Rathbone 1992; Bowman 2000). This was a consequence of the disinterest of the elite in the countryside, and of their movement toward the cities following the social reforms implemented after the Roman conquest (Monson 2012b, pp. 265–272). These developments are known mainly through the papyrological documentation of the second–fourth centuries AD (Łukaszewicz 1986). Oxyrhynchos in particular yielded hundreds of papyri showing how metropolitans were keen on improving their city. Grand monuments reflected their claim to status as a town that belonged to and was integrated in the Roman Empire: a capitol, dynastic temples (e.g. a Caesareum, Sebasteion, and Hadrianeion), a *praetorium*, gymnasia, a *bouleuterion*, Roman baths, fountains, stoas, and so on (Bowman et al. 2007, esp. chapters 11, 13, 15, and 16). Two well-known neighboring towns in Middle Egypt also attest to this trend. The first is the city of Antinoopolis, founded by Hadrian in AD 130. It was constructed according to a regular plan, with a *cardo* and *decumanus*. All edifices that were vital for a city of the Roman Empire were present: a hippodrome, a theater, *tetrastyla*, large baths, and so on (Jomard 1809, pl. 53; Pintaui 2008, 2014). The second is the Egyptian city of Hermopolis, situated just across the river from Antinoopolis. It was founded in the Pharaonic Period, and was adorned with monumental structures to express its Romanness right from the

beginning of imperial rule, and even more so after Hadrian founded his city, which no doubt served as a model (Bailey 1991). Among the buildings discovered on site are a large hexastyle temple with Corinthian columns (perhaps the capitol of the city), a *komasterion* (a place for gatherings and processions), and a *tetrastylon* (a square monument bearing honorific statues).

Furthermore, in the Roman Period, the hydraulic constructions and water-supply systems in Egyptian villages were improved through an extensive system of municipal liturgies. Archeological remains are difficult to trace, since not many Roman villages have been excavated thoroughly. A papyrus dated to AD 113, probably relating to the *metropolis* of the Fayum, describes in detail the complex system of wells, water towers, and lifting mechanisms that supplied the city and its main monuments (fountains, Severian baths, a brewery, a synagogue) with water (Habermann 2000).

Our knowledge of Egyptian urbanism in the Byzantine Period is limited, as the later remains of Egyptian villages have often been neglected in favor of older layers by archeologists. Moreover, excavations generally focus on specific buildings, such as Christian edifices, churches, and monasteries (extensive work has been carried out by Grossmann in Abu Mina, Pelusium, and Antinoopolis, for example; see Grossmann 2002a, 2007). Even in towns where the Byzantine layers are still well preserved (see e.g. Bonnet and Carrez-Maratray 2014 on Pelusium), only emblematic structures such as churches and forts have been excavated, along with some well-preserved buildings constructed with baked bricks laid with hydraulic mortar (e.g. baths and cisterns). Living quarters and road networks, on the other hand, have been largely neglected. The only exception is the oasis of Dakhla, where houses from the Late Roman and Early Byzantine Periods have been preserved remarkably well at Kellis and Amheida, some of them still topped by a roof made of wood and palm branches (Davoli 2011, pp. 82–88; Bagnall et al. 2015; Hope 2015). These two towns were inhabited from the first until the fourth century AD. They had an organic layout and were organized according to different orientations, following the natural slopes of the terrain where they were built. The network of alleys was dense, and houses were generally Egyptian in style (Boozer 2015a,c), although some, like the house of Serenos in Amheida, were decorated with magnificent painted plaster of Classical influence (McFadden 2014).

To conclude this brief overview, despite recent advancements made by archeologists who have reoriented their focus toward living quarters, urbanism in Egypt in the Ptolemaic, Roman, and Byzantine Periods is still largely uncharted territory, mainly due to biases in our source material regarding certain periods, regions, or types of settlement. Any form of general synthesis is impossible. On the other hand, certain monuments that have escaped destruction over time form well-known, -dated, and -studied corpora. In the next section, we focus on baths in order to illustrate more clearly the mechanisms described here.

33.2 Collective Baths in Egypt: Mediterranean Imports with a Local Twist

In the Mediterranean region, from the Hellenistic Period onward, and especially in Roman and Byzantine times, baths formed part of the traditional facilities present in each urban community, and even some villages (Thébert 2003; Yegül 2010). They were utilitarian

structures, but they also reflect the evolution of certain practices, and of the communities that frequented them. The organization and architecture of baths thus present an example of the constant search for a compromise between regional traditions and Greek (and later Roman) models.

In Egypt, baths were “exceptionally numerous” (Jouguet 1911, p. 430). Apart from religious edifices, they are the best-preserved remains of the agglomerations from the later periods. Recent inventories list 34 Greek (Fournet and Redon 2017a,c) and 49 Roman baths (Fournet et al. 2017). In addition, hundreds of Greco-Roman papyri and ostraca mention baths and present evidence for a well-developed bathing culture.

33.2.1 Greek Baths in Egypt: A Phenomenal Success Thanks to the Adaptability of the Model

The practice of collective bathing originated in Greece in the fifth century BC (Ginouvés 1962). In pharaonic Egypt, washing oneself was a private matter; it was done alone, in a small space, shielded from prying eyes (Gräzer 2009).

From the beginning, Greek collective baths consisted of two sections: one for cleansing, and one for relaxation. The first consisted of one or two round spaces (*tholos*) equipped with so-called “hip-bathtubs.” While seated, bathers scrubbed off dirt and rinsed themselves (Figure 33.1), before moving on to soak and relax in the second section. These baths are constructed as social spaces, where people inevitably encountered one another (Redon 2016). Nevertheless, they were generally small buildings, using up less water and fuel than Roman baths, of which they formed the precursors (Thébert 2003, chapter 1).

By the end of the fourth century BC, *tholos* baths started to spread from the Greek mainland to other regions populated by Greeks. Large-scale expansion did not take place until after Alexander’s conquests, however, when baths were constructed wherever Greco-Macedonian colonists settled, all the way to the Bactrian cities (Bernard 1971, pp. 389–412).

Following this dispersion, the original, classical model evolved into three regional types in the course of the third and second centuries BC: in the East, on the Greek mainland, and in Egypt (Trümper 2009; Fournet and Redon 2013). While the other two types have been studied for several decades, the Greco-Egyptian bath has only recently begun to attract attention. Recent excavations, at Taposiris Magna (Fournet and Redon 2009), Tell el-Herr (Abd el-Maksoud 2007), Bouto (Lecuyot and Redon 2014), Karnak (Boraik et al. 2013), Schedia (Bergmann and Heinzelmänn 2009), and Tell Gomaimah (Ashmawy Ali 2009), as well as surveys carried out in the Fayum (Römer 2004, 2013), have made it possible to update the corpus, which now covers almost 50% of the Greek-type buildings known to date (34 out of a total of 70), much more than is the case for Sicily and Greece.

Although they evolved over time, these Greek baths in Egypt retained their most prominent features. They show a strong uniformity: of the 34 buildings excavated, 15 have almost identical layouts (Figure 33.2). Decorations are generally modest; only two buildings (those in Hu and in Karnak) stand out, due to their meticulous mosaic floors (Guimier-Sorbets and Redon 2017). These baths generally had two *tholoi*, which was exceptional outside Egypt. This allowed men and women to bathe simultaneously in the same building, but in separate rooms (Redon 2016). Finally, the Greco-Egyptian baths

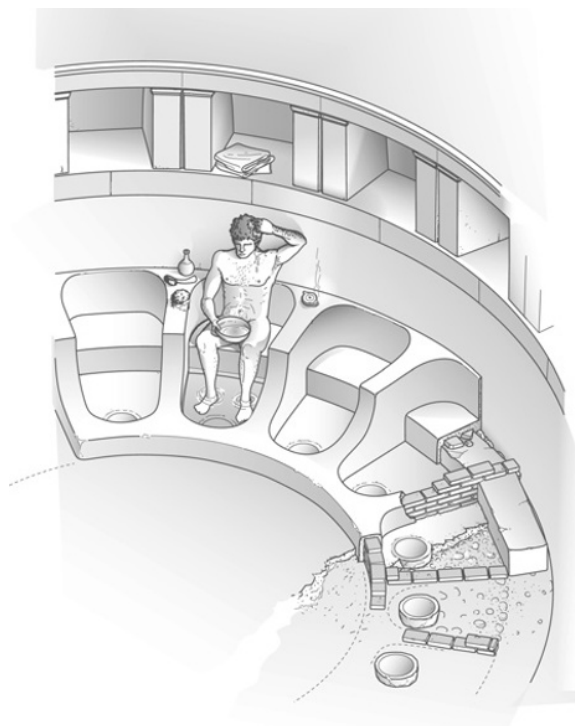


Figure 33.1 Reconstruction of hip-bathtubs, Taposiris Magna. Source: After Fournet, in Fournet and Redon (2017a, figure 5).

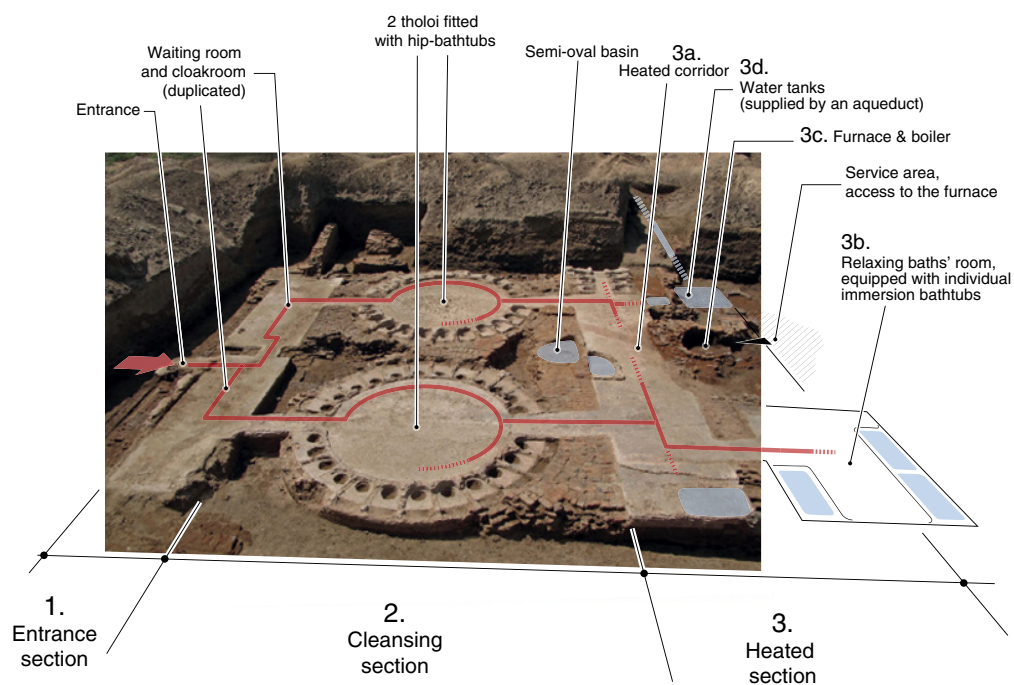


Figure 33.2 A perfect example of the Greco-Egyptian bath type, Bouto East. General view from the south. Source: After Fournet, in Fournet and Redon (2017a, figure 3).

were the only type equipped with individual immersion tubs for relaxing bathing, instead of the collective basins frequently attested in Magna Graecia (Broise 1994). The absence of these communal immersion pools, where clients would soak together in the same water, allowed them to stand naked and wash in a shared space, without having to experience the miasmas of others. In this case, Greek bathing culture was probably adapted to Egyptian concepts of sanitation (Gräzer 2009; Fournet and Redon 2009).

This Greco-Egyptian model, which emerged in the course of the third century BC, became more complex by the end of the second century, when the heating system was improved (Fournet and Redon 2013, 2017a; see Meyer 1984 on boilers; Bouchaud and Redon 2017 on fuel). At the end of the Hellenistic Period, traditions that originated in the Western Mediterranean provided inspiration to accommodate new forms of bathing and to meet the wishes of visitors. The *tholos* baths were gradually divided into two completely unconnected sections; men and women were thus separated more clearly. Furthermore, in one of the two sections, the customary hip-bathtubs designated for cleansing were replaced by raised basins (*labra*). These innovations and the changes they brought about in the bathing culture were no doubt partially inspired by practices attested in Magna Graecia, even though the baths in Egypt retained certain features, such as the absence of communal pools (Abd el-Maksoud 2007; Fournet and Redon 2017a). Finally, around the beginning of the Imperial Period, the Greek baths in Bouto incorporated the new hypocaust heating system invented in the Roman world (Fournet and Redon 2017c, cat. 6).

These developments in Egypt ran parallel to the evolution of the other types of Greek baths. In the West, the baths of Magna Graecia evolved into the Roman *thermae* (Broise 1994, Broise 2009, Tsiolis 2013). The Greco-Egyptian type, on the other hand, although equally innovative and original, did not lead to a new model. On the contrary, despite the Roman conquest, Greek-style baths continued to be built and used during the first and second centuries AD, no doubt due to their ability to adapt to the needs of the Egyptian population in this period. This model was finally abandoned during the second century AD, when it was replaced by a purely Roman model, imported from abroad.

33.2.2 *Roman Thermae: Between Belated Romanization and the “Metropolization” of Egypt*

Several aspects distinguish Roman *thermae* from Greek baths. These are most notably characterized until the end of Antiquity by the strict organization of their layout. The entrance led to a large reception area with a cloakroom, where visitors could undress, linger, and socialize. Next stop was the *tepidarium*, a transition room leading to the hot rooms, where people could scrub and wash, sweat, and rid themselves of the last traces of grime before heading toward the immersion baths. After this, they made their way toward the *frigidarium*, where they could take a dip in basins or pools of cold water. This multi-stage trajectory required more sophisticated and efficient techniques than the Greek baths (such as heating the floors (*hypocausta*) and walls), and allowed the buildings to be expanded and to take on more clientele. Eventually, the Roman *thermae* became systematically associated with sports infrastructure, the *palaestra*, and the gymnasium (on Roman *thermae*, see Nielsen 1990; Thébert 2003; Yegül 2010; Fournet 2012).

The layout of the *thermae* in Egypt of the first three centuries AD is not well known. Only 17 structures have been uncovered, and most of them are in a rather bad state (Redon 2017; Fournet and Redon 2017b). However, baths and the practice of collective bathing are still mentioned in the papyri. In addition to the more than a 100 tax ostraca related to baths, some 50 additional texts attest to a very lively bathing culture.

This discrepancy between the archeological record and written documentation can be explained in a number of ways. First, the success and technological evolution of Greek baths, which could be found in great numbers across the Egyptian countryside, no doubt made Roman innovations less attractive in the early years of Roman domination (see earlier). Second, our source material is biased: perhaps even more so for the Roman than for the Ptolemaic Period, excavations generally focus on villages, medium-sized towns, and desert forts, while the Egyptian *metropoleis* remain relatively less well known (e.g. Oxyrhynchos, the layout of which can only be reconstructed on the basis of written sources; see Bowman et al. 2007). Yet, both papyri and the few remains at our disposal clearly show that at the beginning of the Roman Period, resources became concentrated in a relatively low number of Roman-type baths, situated exclusively in the *metropoleis* and within or near fortresses (Redon 2017, pp. 271–273).

The first *thermae* in Egypt were apparently erected in a military context. The army played an important role in their diffusion from the middle of the first century AD onward, and military baths make up half of the corpus (Redon 2009). These were rather modest (less than 150 m²), and architecturally very diverse (Reddé 2009).

Roman-type baths in large Egyptian towns are mentioned in papyri from the middle of the first century AD onward, and especially in the second century. They are first coined “baths of the gymnasium”; the term *θέρμῃ*, “hot baths,” only appears under Antoninus Pius and in the third and fourth centuries (Redon 2017, p. 270). Several *thermae* are also mentioned in texts relating to Alexandria, Antinoopolis, and perhaps Naucratis, as well as *metropoleis* such as Hermopolis, Krokodilopolis, Oxyrhynchos, and Panopolis. Unfortunately, it is impossible to study in detail the architecture of these buildings, since only four located in large towns have survived (Alexandria, Antinoopolis, Bouto, and Karnak/Thebes), and just one (in Karnak) is well preserved. This was built in the second century AD, near the entrance of the Amon temple, close to the Nile bank. It was constructed according to an “imperial-type” layout, which incorporated all characteristics of the large *thermae* of Rome (e.g. a ring circuit and a symmetrical layout), but in miniature form, making it the smallest imperial-type *thermae* in the Roman world (Figure 33.3). Additionally, it did not offer any sports facilities (Boraik et al. 2017).

Concerning the Egyptian *chora*, on the other hand, written and archeological sources seem to point toward a progressive abandonment of the tradition of collective bathing, which had been so lively in the Hellenistic Period.

33.2.3 *The Boom of Thermae in the Byzantine Era*

The epoch between the reforms of Diocletian and the Arabian conquest provides us with an abundant corpus, counting no less than 36 *thermae*. The number of baths rose significantly in this period, particularly in the fifth and sixth centuries. The layout of these buildings was remarkably homogenous – most notably in the Mareotis region, the hinterland

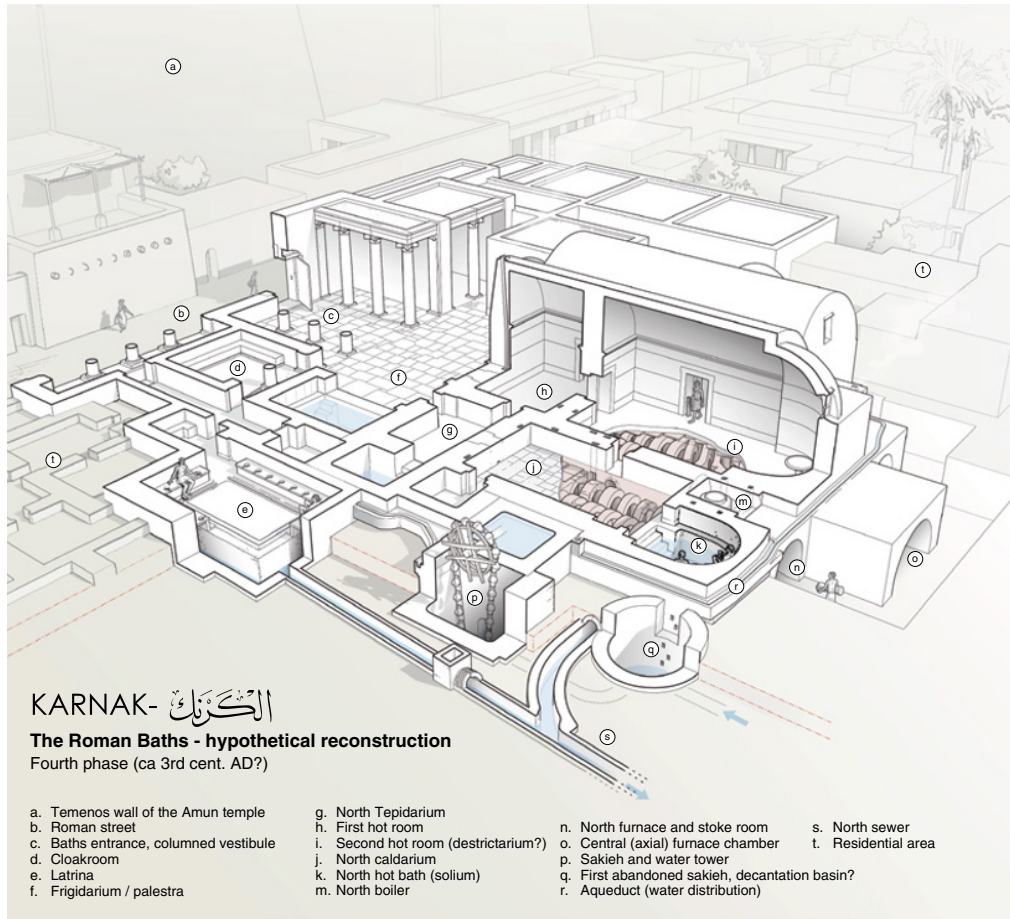


Figure 33.3 Hypothetical reconstruction of the thermae, Karnak. Source: After Fournet, in Boraik et al. (2017, figure 28).

of Alexandria. In this area alone, 11 baths have survived that were in use between the fifth and the eighth century AD.

Like other regional subtypes of the Roman-Byzantine world, baths in Egypt developed their own features (Fournet and Redon 2017b). Egyptian thermae were, in the first place, small buildings: on average, they occupied some 500 m² (as opposed to the 1000–3000 m² customary in northern Africa); the only two truly monumental examples are the thermae of Kom el-Dikka in Alexandria and those of Antinoopolis, the two largest cities in Byzantine Egypt (Boraik et al. 2017, figure 30). On average, the heated rooms in the Egyptian thermae took up no more than half the space designated for this purpose in other regions, and the usual monumentality was limited to the unheated areas, which continued to increase in size. These cold areas, however, do not seem to have included sports facilities, unlike in the rest of the Mediterranean world, where this feature remained tied to the gymnasium.

The heating techniques used were also novel. The furnaces, sometimes called “high flame furnaces” (Kołataj 1992, pp. 176–178), were located in the center of the structure, and could be accessed through underground corridors that ran beneath the whole building (Figure 33.4). Very deep, they were topped by sophisticated boilers that supplied hot water to all the small basins scattered among the heated halls. In this way, adjacent rooms could also be heated, as the hot air produced circulated under the floors and through the chimneys enclosed in the walls. This layout, with the furnace located in the center of the building, is typical of Byzantine Egypt, and allowed for the baths to be split into two independent bathing circuits. This was not a new format: double baths had existed in the Roman world since the first century AD, so that men and women could bathe separately without the need for alternating opening hours (Nielsen 1990, pp. 146–148; see earlier for segregated Greek baths). This arrangement was hardly applied in the Imperial Period, however, or even after the rise of Christianity in the fourth and fifth centuries (Nielsen 1990, pp. 147–148). Egypt thus clearly stands out from the rest of the Mediterranean. In the Mareotis region, for example, six or even seven of the eleven discovered baths consist of two juxtaposed yet independent and often identical circuits. Both sides have monumental spaces, porticos, and latrines, and they count the same number of heated rooms or tubs. Only when specific utensils or jewelry are discovered is it (sometimes) possible to determine whether a circuit was reserved for men or for women (Szymanska and Babraj 2008). In any case, their presence demonstrates that the well-established

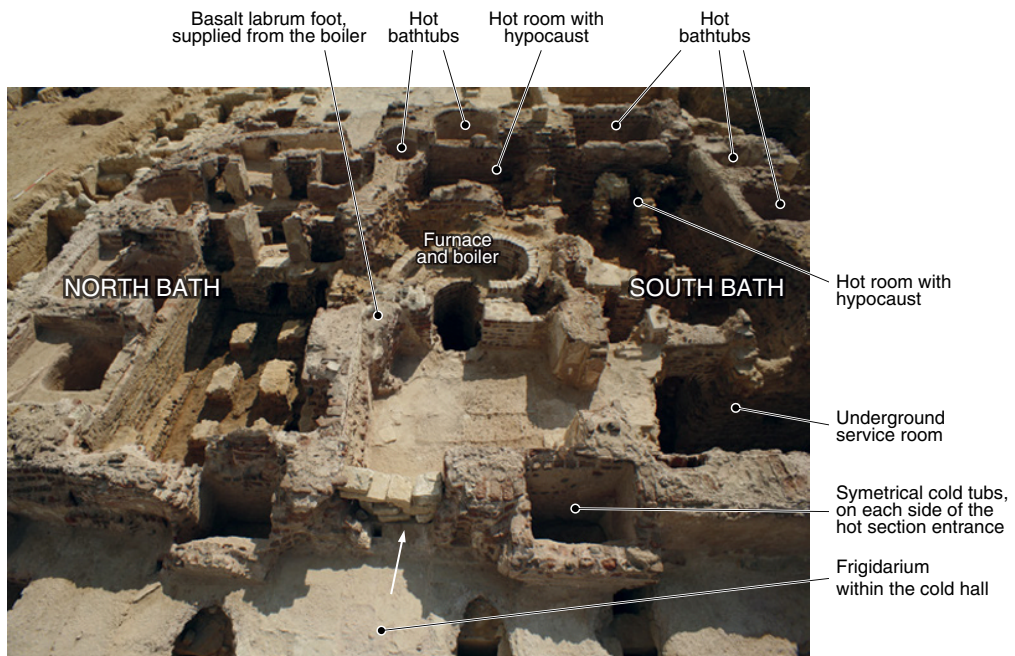


Figure 33.4 Double Byzantine baths, general view of the central block from the west, Marea. Source: After Fournet, in Fournet and Redon (2017b, figure 13; cf. Szymanska and Babraj 2008, figure 12).

Egyptian tradition of allowing women to visit baths by providing separate facilities for both sexes was still very much alive in the Byzantine era, as had been already during the Ptolemaic Period.

33.2.4 *The Location and Role of Baths in Ptolemaic, Roman, and Byzantine Villages*

From the third century BC until the seventh or even eighth century AD (the *thermae* of Marea and Taposiris in the Marcotis region were still in use after the Arab conquest), the success of collective baths in Egypt is evidenced by both the large number of attestations in the papyri and the impressive number of uncovered buildings. Thanks to the papyri, we know that people generally frequented the baths every other day (Faucher and Redon 2014, p. 850). The entrance fee remained low over time, equivalent to the smallest denomination in circulation (Faucher and Redon 2014). Estimates show that the number of visitors in the Ptolemaic Period (the only period for which sufficient data are available) amounted to several tens or even hundreds of thousands of visitors each year (Redon 2011, pp. 307–310).

There are several reasons for this success. Baths are often seen as places for socializing and recreation (Fagan 2011, pp. 358–376), and are sometimes even linked to identity. In Egypt, however, things were more complex, and different aspects evolved in the course of the Ptolemaic, Roman, and Byzantine Periods.

The status of these baths changed over time. The majority of the Ptolemaic baths mentioned in the papyri were private property (Redon 2011, pp. 303–307). As commercial enterprises, they had to be profitable, and therefore had to be open to a wide public, without restrictions. It is thus probably wrong to consider them as places linked to a specific ethnic or social identity. The practice of collective bathing may have been imported by Greek immigrants, and many of the baths may have been constructed in regions with a strong Greek presence (in the first place, the Western Delta and the Fayum; see Redon 2012b), but buildings have also been found in less Hellenized areas, such as the Eastern Delta, and even Karnak, near the gates of the Great Amon temple (Redon and Faucher 2015). For a small entrance fee, anyone could gain admission, regardless of his or her background. The uniformity of the architecture and the infrastructure offered by the Egyptian *tholos* baths makes it impossible to distinguish between baths “for the populace” and baths “for the elite.” On the contrary, the papyri show a large social, sexual, and even cultural diversity among the people frequenting them (Redon 2016). Thus, for their customers, access to the Ptolemaic baths never brought with it the same implications as access to the gymnasium (there was never any connection between the two during this period). Moreover, baths were known for the violence that was often acted out there, which is proof that they were essentially places where people mingled, sometimes at their own risk (Redon 2016). This is reflected by the advantageous location of Egyptian baths on the periphery of towns and villages, near their main entrance routes (Redon 2012a; Römer 2013). These buildings were meant to accommodate a colorful clientele, consisting of both locals (who quickly appropriated these edifices, as is clear from their designation as “village baths” even if they were owned by private individuals) and travelers passing through.

In the Roman Period, the government invested more directly in the construction and management of municipal facilities in the large towns of Egypt, including collective baths (see earlier). Privately run baths continued to exist, but most of our sources concern public ones. They show metropolitans competing to adorn their towns with grand structures, vouching for their supply, maintenance, repair, and restoration themselves (Strobel 2014; Redon 2017). These buildings had a symbolic value, and were aimed at integrating these large Egyptian towns into the network of cities across the Roman Empire, all of which strived to resemble Rome (Bowman 2000). In Karnak, this resolve is evident from the erection of imperial-style *thermae* to show off the town's Romanness, adapted to meet its limited financial resources. Even the small hamlet of Marina el-Alamein, on the western fringes of Egypt, was adorned with miniature-sized *thermae* (Bąkowska-Czerner and Czerner 2017). Moreover, due to the intrinsic link between some of these large baths and the gymnasium (Meyer 1997), they received a statutory role that they had not had before, as membership of the gymnasium – apart from involving statutory and fiscal privileges – was now required in order to obtain Roman citizenship.

This new status (for certain baths at least), along with the increasing tendency toward monumentalization, caused many baths to be relocated. In this respect, the case of Oxyrhynchos is enlightening. Its public baths in the Roman Period were not spread out randomly, but were located at strategic places in the heart of the *metropolis*: near the gymnasium, near water sources, and alongside the main roads. The *thermae* thus became polarizing sites, as well as spatial reference points in the *metropoleis* (Gascou 2012, p. 312 describes them as *τόποι ἐπίσημοι*, “remarkable structures”), since it became customary to name streets and districts after them.

Papyri of the Byzantine Period still mention large *thermae* in the *metropoleis* (e.g. Hermopolis, Krokodilopolis, and Oxyrhynchos). The latest document, SPP VIII 980, is dated to the middle of the seventh century. Some baths were in a bad state of repair or even abandoned. Around AD 567–570, for example, inhabitants of Antaiopolis in the Theban region complained that all that was left was a private bath, when in the past the imperial and public baths of their city had been so grand (P.Cair.Masp. I 67009.22-4). Others, however, were still maintained by metropolitans by means of the liturgical system. Thus, P.Oxy. XXXVI 2780 (AD 553) recalls a rich benefactor of Oxyrhynchos, Flavia Gabriela, who took on the costs of the water supply for the public baths of the city.

Thermae were also widespread in the Egyptian *chora*, even in largely unknown places where baths are the only archeological remains left (see e.g. Daressy 1912, pp. 174–184 on Kom el-Dosheh in the south-western Delta). They were present even in the smallest of villages, just like in the Hellenistic Period (see earlier). Our sources mention several edifices in modest villages or on private agricultural estates, such as the numerous baths owned by the great family of the Apiones on their domains in the Oxyrhynchite countryside (P.Oxy. XVI 1921 and 1925, seventh century AD). This tendency, encouraged by the elites with large estates in the *chora* (Rathbone 1991; Rowlandson 1996), could partly explain the presence of modest baths in the Mareotis region (it is difficult to assess whether these were private or public; see for instance the baths of Ezbet Fath'allah, published by Abd el-Fattah and Seif el-Din 2009. On the large wine-producing domains in this region, see Empereur and Picon 1998).

Finally, baths are frequently attested in a Christian context. Written sources show that bathing was a common practice in monasteries (although it was sometimes renounced

together with other earthly pleasures; Mossakowska-Gaubert 2009). Certain baths related to the cults of saints also had a therapeutic role (Gatier 2009). But above all, the large number of *thermae* discovered in the Mareotis region, in Abu Mina and some relatively important villages, can be explained by the hospitality obligations toward the numerous pilgrims there – as well as the economic opportunities they presented (Fournet et al. 2017; cat. 47–48, 87, 70–71, 75). These baths were located near the pilgrimage routes leading to this large religious center, which developed from the fifth century onward (Bangert 2010).

33.3 Conclusion

From Alexander to the Arab conquest, Egypt has been a land where different cultures came into contact. New buildings, architectural styles, and practices were introduced by new settlers. Their mixture with Egyptian traditions created hybrid and often creative solutions in urbanism and architecture. In the bathing field, hybridity and innovation are constant throughout the period, and the flexibility and adaptation of the original models (developed in the Greek and Roman worlds) to the Egyptian background is noticeable. This trend would survive in medieval and modern Egypt, with the hammams showing deep originality compared to Middle Eastern types, and the same local homogeneity as their Greek, Roman, and Byzantine forebears.

FURTHER READING

The archeological and historical guide by Bagnall and Rathbone (2004) gives an excellent overview of the settlements of Egypt during the Greco-Roman and Byzantine eras. On urbanism in the same period, see Davoli (2010, 2011, 2012) and Müller (2010). For the baths in particular, see *Le bain collectif en Égypte*, edited by Boussac, Fournet and Redon (2009), and Redon's (2017) book *Collective Baths in Egypt 2. New Discoveries and Perspectives*.

CHAPTER THIRTY-FOUR

Creativity in Visual Arts

Martina Minas-Nerpel

34.1 A Dialogue Between Change and Continuity

With Alexander the Great's probable coronation as pharaoh at Memphis (Winter 2005, pp. 205–207; Pfeiffer 2014, pp. 104–106) and his consultation of the oracle in Siwa Oasis, where he was declared the son of Zeus-Ammon, he demonstrated a wish to be legitimized by the Egyptian gods. A legitimate pharaoh was required to care for Egypt by fighting against its enemies and by providing temples and cults for the gods. Alexander used the ideas of Egyptian divine kingship for his own purposes while fulfilling the needs of those whose native traditions they supported: the Egyptian elite.

The Ptolemies followed his example and carried to fruition the aspiration of the last native rulers of the Thirtieth Dynasty to create a once again powerful Egyptian empire, which dominated the Eastern Mediterranean at least for a time. The gigantic Egyptian temples of the Greco-Roman Period are the principal surviving monuments of the Ptolemies and the Roman emperors in the country (Minas-Nerpel 2012, 2017), so it seems evident that these rulers attached great importance to these enormous structures, which dominated Egypt's landscape in ancient as in modern times. Temple construction continued well into the second century AD, and temple decoration, although on a much smaller scale, into the third and the beginning of the fourth centuries. Temple architecture, reliefs, and inscriptions attest not only to the continuation of tradition but also to creativity in theological and iconographic matters, from which the strongly visual Hieroglyphic writing system should not be excluded.

Alongside the unbroken customs of the indigenous Egyptian population, the new Greek elite established their own traditions in Ptolemaic Egypt, resulting in a slow process of transformation and new trends in style. Under Roman rule, three cultures

met in Egypt: Egyptian, Greek, and Roman. Greek representational forms, in both two and three dimensions, were incorporated into the fabric of the society and became familiar, while native Egyptian culture maintained a strong presence, both physically and in social practices and language. The multiethnic population was thus situated among new patterns of rule and traditional ways of life, which resulted in sophisticated artistic modes of expressions that maintained a dialogue between change and continuity. Change should not be seen as negative or as decline, as it often has for Egypt's Late Periods (Stadler 2012a, p. 390). Change, rather, stands for the ongoing vigor in Egyptian culture.

34.2 Diversity of Sources and Scholarship

A definition of the abstract word “art” is difficult to supply (Robins 1997, pp. 12–29; Baines 2014). The Egyptian word *ḥm.t*, “craft, art,” corresponds in many ways to the pre-nineteenth century Western terms and usages for “art” (Baines 2007). Although Egyptians gathered past works (e.g. in Tanis), they did not collect art in museums, galleries, or *villae*, as the Greeks and Romans had already started doing. Egyptian art was mostly developed to serve practical purposes, for daily life, for worship, and for eternity. Although a rigid convention was applied, Egyptian artists also valued variation and avoided producing exact copies of the same forms. Change and cultural influences were possible, and hybrid forms could develop. Specific styles and forms in Roman Egypt have been widely discussed (e.g. Bergmann 2010; Riggs 2005).

For this chapter, “art” refers more or less to all the visual evidence attested for Egypt, even if for many, the term “visual arts” primarily conjures up funerary art, including burial goods, mummy masks, portraits, coffins, shrouds, tomb architecture, and decoration. Besides Thebes, Tuna el-Gebel, and other places, large necropoleis were located in or near Alexandria. These have been explored by Venit (2002). The new capital city of Egypt, the “first city of the civilized world” (Diodorus Siculus 17.52.5), has meanwhile been studied by many scholars, notably Fraser (1972), Grimm (1998), Pfrommer (1999), and McKenzie (2007). Alexandria was conceived as a Greek *polis*, which not only exploited the wealth of Egypt, but also imported luxury items from places as far away as India. Buildings were embellished with numerous Egyptian features, and sculpture and architectural elements were transported from all over Egypt, as exemplified by “Cleopatra’s Needles,” two famous obelisks that were moved from Heliopolis and positioned in front of the Caesareum (McKenzie 2007, p. 177). New visual expressions were created, and these illuminate questions of identity and cross-cultural influences in the multicultural city. McKenzie (2007) provides a substantial overview and analysis of Alexandria and its features, both Classical and Egyptian, from its foundation until the seventh century AD, taking into account not only material culture, but also political, cultural, religious, and philosophical developments. Her study demonstrates that in the last few decades, scholarship and publications have shown a resurgence of interdisciplinary research in a multiethnic society in Alexandria and the *chora*, exploring not only individuals, but also collective and cultural-religious identities (Vandorpe 2012; see also Chapters 18 and 19 for social and ethnic identities).

Identity depends on one's situation, both in life and in death, and is to a certain extent negotiable. Within the country's administrative elite, there was soon not much distinction according to the "ethnic" classification, because the inhabitants liked to switch between cultures and religions (Baines 2004). This fluidity has a large impact on the sources and their analysis. Several publications are dedicated to the study of how art and identity intersected, very often in funerary beliefs and material culture (e.g. Riggs 2005), and the same is visible in exhibitions such as *Les empereurs du Nil* (Willems and Clarysse 2000), *Cleopatra of Egypt: From History to Myth* (Walker and Higgs 2001), and *Egypt's Sunken Treasures* (Goddio and Clauss 2006). Egypt under Greek and Roman rule, with its tradition and new cultural developments, which often produced hybrid features, can only be illuminated meaningfully by interdisciplinary approaches, as exemplified by Beck et al. (2005).

This chapter cannot be comprehensive in covering categories of artifacts; instead, it focuses on some trends in different areas of the cross-cultural visual legacy. Many groups of material can only be mentioned and developments only summarized, but case studies highlight specific creative changes. Since art cannot be separated from its cultural setting, the context is described, or at least alluded to, in all case studies.

In most cases, visual evidence should not be separated from written testimonies. Often, the same source combines both textual and iconographic details, and visual and textual sources have complementary roles in the analysis of cultural, social, religious, and political elements. Besides some of the main categories of visual sources – temples, tombs, and stelae – this is true in particular of the inscribed sculpture of the Ptolemaic and Roman Periods. Ptolemaic rulers and Roman emperors were shown as pharaohs, with some hybrid features. Their statues have been discussed in some detail (e.g. Ashton 2001; Albersmeier 2002; Stanwick 2002; Walker and Higgs 2001), but statuary, both private and royal, is a vast area, with many cross-cultural influences, so that Lembke and Vittmann (2000, p. 8) comment in their contribution: "Die Kunstgeschichte der ptolemäischen und römischen Zeit ist bis heute ein Buch mit sieben Siegeln."

Coins were widely disseminated, and they combine elements of all of the cultures that came together in Egypt. On the obverse, they bore the approved royal or imperial image, and on the reverse, a variety of symbolic images drawing on Greek, Roman, and Egyptian content but conveyed in the Hellenistic mode (Kyrieleis 1975). Personal objects, such as jewelry (Pfrommer 2001) and art in glass (Schlick-Nolte 2004), bronze, and other metals (Rabe 2011), are innovative but consistent with those made in other areas of the contemporary Mediterranean world (Riggs 2005, p. 25). Because it is not possible to discuss them in this chapter – nor paintings and mosaics (see e.g. McKenzie 2007, pp. 181–184; Grimm 1998, pp. 102–105), terracottas (Sandri 2012), or pottery (Kreuzer 2011; Gates-Foster 2012) – I focus on one specific, highly creative type: the *oinochoai*, "wine jugs," which were basically Greek vases with partly Egyptian details that exemplify political, religious, and cultural issues. I begin, however, with the largest group, the Egyptian temples, within which were found some Egyptian royal stelae. After considering developments in this group, I analyze the example of Arsinoe II and the traditions and innovations in visual sources reflecting her position within the dynasty, in a treatment that combines several groups of material.

34.3 Egyptian Temples and Stelae

The huge temples, such as those at Dendara and Edfu, are much larger than anything that came before. Yet the foreign rulers, both the Ptolemaic kings and the Roman emperors, knew little in detail of the meaning of these buildings and their inscriptions. The construction policy, although centrally steered by the court, must have been stimulated by the priests and native elite, whose life focused around the temples, which were fundamental repositories of native Egyptian culture, and under Roman rule almost its sole carriers (Baines 1997, pp. 216, 231), embodying a sense of the Egyptian elite identity (Spencer 2010, pp. 441–446; Minas-Nerpel 2012, 2017). This significance for the elite may be one reason why the traditional forms of Egyptian cult places persisted through periods of foreign occupation.

At the same time, two different worlds, the Egyptian and the Hellenic-Roman, could be joined in one temple complex, as exemplified by Greek building inscriptions, for example in the temple of Hathor at Dendara. Outside the main entrance of this temple complex, there are Classical structures, such as the fountain house on either side of the entrance at the end of the colonnaded *dromos*, just before entering the enclosure (McKenzie 2007, pp. 160–161), while within the temple itself, traditional Egyptian decoration dominates. Just a few Hellenistic features are present in Egyptian temples, such as the zodiac on the ceiling of one of the Osiris rooftop chapels at Dendara (Cauville 1997). This zodiac is a planisphere or map of the stars or the sky on a plane projection in circular form, reflecting Greek and Babylonian influences in astronomy. In the temple, the zodiac signs themselves take Egyptian representational forms, but in tombs and on coffins some signs are in Classical forms (Osing et al. 1982, pp. 96–101; Riggs 2005, pp. 201–203).

The Egyptian temples of the Greco-Roman Period were not only architecturally sophisticated, but also decorated – and originally painted – in very complex ways according to specific principles of decoration (Kurth 1994). Despite their provincial locations, many of these temples display a high standard of execution, but they have hardly been studied from an art-historical perspective, with exceptions such as Vassilika (1989) and McKenzie (2007, pp. 119–146). Detailed studies of iconographic elements, such as royal regalia, are a *desideratum*, although items such as the “mantle” that the Ptolemaic king could wear in ritual scenes of confirmation of rule have received some consideration. A related form of garment can also be found on the late Ptolemaic and early Roman statues known as “striding draped male figures” (Bianchi 1978). These hybrid statues combine elements of Egyptian and Greek origin, representing their owners in elaborately draped ceremonial fringed garments, with the hem held in a fist. This type is not attested in Egyptian statuary of the Dynastic Period and was devised to meet the new social and cultural demands of the Greco-Roman era (Warda 2012).

The Satrap Stele (Figure 34.1) exemplifies how textual sources can elucidate the implications and significance of images. This stele, of pure Egyptian design, 185 cm high, was discovered in 1870 rebuilt into a Cairo mosque; it is now in the Egyptian Museum Cairo (CG 22182; Kamal 1904, pl. LVI; Schäfer 2011). Under the lunette, it is inscribed with 18 lines of Hieroglyphic text. The monument dates to year seven of Alexander IV (311 BC), when Ptolemy son of Lagus did not yet rule over Egypt as king, only as satrap (see Chapter 3). In the last section (lines 12–18), the monument commemorates the



Figure 34.1 The Satrap Stele, showing Pharaoh Alexander IV or Satrap Ptolemy offering to Harendotes (left) and Wadjet (right). Source: courtesy Cairo, Egyptian Museum CG 22182. Photograph Kamal (1904, pl. LVI). © Egyptian Museum, Cairo.

return of an agricultural area to the ownership of the temple of Bouto in the Delta, where the stele was probably set up. In return, the priests reassure Ptolemy of divine support, which of course implies their own. This example is a key to understanding the effort that went into constructing temples, and thus caring for the Egyptian cults: according to the principle *do ut des*, the ruler would be blessed and supported by the Egyptian deities, and thus by the clergy. The Ptolemies needed to secure the support of the native priesthood and administrators, since they played such a leading role in the political, economic, social, and cultural life of Egypt.

In the lunette of the Satrap Stele, a typical Egyptian ruler is depicted twice under the winged sun disk offering to the god Harendotes and the goddess Wadjet, but his cartouches remain empty, even though the stele text uses a date of Alexander IV. The king is not mentioned otherwise in the inscription, only Ptolemy, whose deeds are praised like those of a traditional pharaoh. It seems that Alexander IV merely served for dating purposes, but

was otherwise dispensable in favor of his satrap, or perhaps already dead – possible reasons why the cartouches remain empty. The depiction, and thus the ruler's identity, remains ambiguous, since it could refer to either Alexander or Ptolemy; a creative solution of the priest(s) who drew up the stele's scenes and inscriptions.

Although made almost 300 years later, the Gallus Stele (Figure 34.2) stands very much in the tradition of the Satrap Stele, at least in regard to the praise of a governor in Hieroglyphic Egyptian (Hoffmann et al. 2009; Minas-Nerpel and Pfeiffer 2010). When Octavian departed Egypt in 30 BC, he placed the new Roman province *Aegyptus* in the charge of C. Cornelius Gallus, who received the newly created title of *praefectus Alexandreae et Aegypti*, "Prefect of Alexandria and Egypt." His trilingual victory stele of pink Aswan granite, originally about 165 cm high, is housed in the Egyptian Museum Cairo (CG 9295) and dates to April 16, 29 BC. It was discovered in 1896 in front of Augustus' temple at Philae, which the prefect Rubrius Barbarus had dedicated in Augustus' year 18 (13/12 BC). When cut for reuse in the foundations of the temple's altar, parts of the top and approximately 8 cm in the middle were removed.

The layout of the stele is purely Egyptian. In the lunette, the traditional Egyptian winged solar disk is depicted. In the register below, a group of a horseman attacking an enemy, both Hellenistic in style, is carved in sunk relief, framed by three columns of Hieroglyphic text on both sides. Below the relief, there are 28 lines of inscription, 10 in



Figure 34.2 The Gallus Stele, showing Egypt's first Roman prefect in a Hellenistic pose. Source: courtesy Cairo, Eg. Museum CG 9295. Photograph Lyons (1896, p. 51). © Egyptian Museum, Cairo.

Hieroglyphs, 9 in Latin, and 9 in Greek, conveying the deeds of Gallus. It can be assumed that Gallus himself ordered that he be depicted as a triumphant victor in Hellenistic tradition. He probably also drew up the Latin inscription, so that we have unique evidence of his own understanding of his deeds and actions. In an idealized battle scene, he is shown attacking an enemy who has fallen to his knees and is trying to protect himself with his shield. The depiction is accompanied and explained by a line of Hieroglyphs including a cartouche, which should be read “Romaïos,” referring to Octavian, the soon-to-be Augustus.

The horseman, Hellenistic in style, does not fit well on an otherwise Egyptian stele. It was quite unusual that Gallus, as a living general, wished to be depicted as a horseman in a relief scene. On the assumption that the Gallus Stele once stood in a public place of the Isis temple complex, the audience for his self-presentation would have included Greek, Roman, and Egyptian visitors. Greeks and Romans would have recognized the triumphant attitude without difficulty. Egyptians, too, could understand a group like this one, since temple walls depicted the pharaoh slaughtering enemies, even if the Egyptian king was never shown riding a horse in combat. This motif is only known in the Hellenistic Period from the Raphia Monument from 217 BC (Hoffmann et al. 2009, pp. 27–28), but more examples probably existed. On the Raphia Monument, the Hellenistic pharaoh is depicted as a triumphant horseman spearing an enemy who has fallen to his knees. With this depiction, the Ptolemaic ruler imitates Alexander the Great, combining the traditional Egyptian icon of a pharaoh punishing enemies with the Hellenistic element of a horseman in combat. Gallus was possibly adapting a fairly widespread motif in a more Hellenistic form, but his pose might have been misunderstood as an imitation of Alexander or a Ptolemy-like immortalization. However, the main message was conveyed: he was a glorious general, proud of his victories.

The depiction of the horseman at the center of the lunette created another problem: to show the Egyptian deities behind the Roman prefect would contravene Egyptian norms. Therefore, they are not depicted; only their names and epithets are inscribed – Khnum, Satis, and Anukis on the left side, Osiris, Isis, and Horus on the right. This arrangement avoided that Gallus assumed the royal prerogative of being depicted venerating Egyptian gods. The horseman could have been placed left, as on the Raphia Stele, but he is much more prominent in the middle, and this must have been Gallus’ aim; the more so since far more viewers of the stele could comprehend the image than could read the inscriptions. Inscriptions were important and necessary for the stele as an entity, but the visual element of the triumphant horseman spearing an enemy was the main feature for the audience.

Gallus’ alleged hubris and his assumed *damnatio memoriae* have often been discussed. *Damnatio memoriae*, the destruction of all memory of a person, is well known from Pharaonic Egypt, and we also encounter it in Roman Egypt, for example in the so-called Emperors’ Corridor in the temple of Sobek and Haroeris at Kom Ombo, where Commodus’ name has been erased. Construction and decoration of the Kom Ombo temple started under Ptolemy VI Philometor and continued through to the early third century AD. This large building was designed as a unique double temple with two main west–east temple axes, the southern one leading to the sanctuary of Sobek, the northern one to that of Haroeris. Both principal deities formed the center of triads that were well established long before this temple was built: Haroeris was linked to Hathor and Khonsu,

Sobek to the rather abstract deities Tasenetnofret, “the Good Sister/Spouse,” and the child-god Panebtawy, “the Lord of the Two Lands” (Baines 1997, p. 231). Kom Ombo exemplifies perfectly the continuation and elaboration of theological traditions and the creative thought of the priests, which can be detected in the architecture as well as in the iconography and the texts.

The ritual scenes show two categories of protagonists: one or several deities, and the pharaoh in traditional Egyptian regalia, whether native or foreign. It was a requirement of temple decoration to show the pharaoh performing the rituals that would guarantee the maintenance of the Egyptian cosmos. From the very beginning of Roman rule, Octavian-Augustus and his successors were depicted as pharaohs. Although the rulers were not Egyptian, they were the ritual protagonists who approached the divine power in order to sustain Maat (“truth, world order”). The Ptolemies might have regarded it as beneficial to possess this religious legitimacy, but Roman emperors do not seem to have been concerned about it, although temples were funded generously until at least the mid-second century AD. Egypt remained important because it was economically vital. However, even if the Roman pharaohs wanted to be seen doing the proper thing in the temple context, they were rarely present in the country. Hölbl (2000, p. 18, 117, 2004, pp. 102–105) hence concludes that the Roman emperor should be seen as a “cultic pharaoh,” who had lost his historical significance.

This generic character seems to be valid for most relief scenes, but a political or historical meaning can be detected in several instances, such as the ritual scenes carved in the Emperors’ Corridor of Kom Ombo (Hölbl 2000, pp. 94–99, figures 119, 121–125; Minas-Nerpel 2012, pp. 374–378, with references). On the northern half of the inner east face of the corridor, seven ritual scenes depict Marcus Aurelius (AD 161–180) either as sole ruler or accompanied by his co-regent Lucius Verus (161–169). The southern half is decorated with only three scenes, of which the earlier are the two northern ones, bearing the cartouches of Commodus (180–192). In each case, parts of the latter’s name were erased, exhibiting his *damnatio memoriae* and reflecting developments that affected the entire Roman world, even indigenous temples in southern Egypt. The latest relief scene on this wall was decorated under Macrinus Augustus and his son Diadumenianus (217–218), who is otherwise not attested in Egyptian temples. The empty panels on the southern half show that the decoration of the corridor and the temple was abandoned after the death of Diadumenianus. Even if Egyptian temples received less attention than before, the degree of reflection of historic-political events in such an atmosphere is impressive, although the style of the reliefs is arguably less accomplished and more “provincial” than earlier in the Imperial Period, reflecting the general decline in funding and requisite artistic skills in Egyptian temples.

One offering scene in the northern half of the Emperors’ Corridor is quite unique among the surviving material. It shows a set of surgical instruments, as well as a shallow basin on a stand beneath a cone-shaped jar bearing a Hieroglyphic text (see Figure 32.1; see also Hölbl 2000, p. 96, figure 121; Bagnall and Rathbone 2004, p. 136). The upper part of the scene is lost. Marcus Aurelius, depicted kneeling, faces two small, seated goddesses, Isis and an unknown deity, and offered two *wedjat*-eyes in his raised hands to Haroeris and his consort Tasenetneferet. The surgical instruments aid in the healing of the mythical eye of Horus. From the cone-shaped jar, water is poured into the shallow basin,

and the text accompanying it explains that this is done in order to purify and heal the *wedjat*-eyes. The text to the left of the vase links the water to the places in Egypt where the body parts of Osiris were buried. The jar represents in a rather geometrical way the form of Egypt, being broader at the top (the Delta) and narrower at the bottom (Elephantine at the first cataract). This ritual re-enacts the resurrection of Osiris and the fertility of Egypt in connection with the regenerative Nile flood. As Osiris is restored, illnesses are cured by both science and ritual means. This relief demonstrates the extraordinary creativity of the priests in linking both mythical depictions and description and medical instruments with a ritual that was probably performed in the temple.

This is not the place to discuss the temple architecture (see e.g. Arnold 1999; Kurth 2004a; Minas-Nerpel 2012, 2017), but one feature that demonstrates the period's creativity should be mentioned: composite column capitals, which exhibit a large and complex range of variation. They bring together different vegetal elements and are instantly recognizable features of Egyptian temples of the Greco-Roman era (Arnold 1999, pp. 292–302; Phillips 2002, pp. 161–210; Fauerbach 2009), forming a point of contact with Hellenistic architecture (McKenzie 2007, pp. 122–132, 138–146) and displaying the most cutting-edge methods used to create such visual parts of the temples. An example is one of the composite capitals of the kiosk of Qertassi in Nubia (Figure 34.3), dating to the Early Roman Period (Arnold 1999, pp. 237–240). The eight-stemmed lily capital comprises three tiers of leaves, including palm and lotus. The leaves of the third layer are further decorated with wine and grain motifs.



Figure 34.3 Kiosk of Qertassi, composite capital with different vegetal elements. Source: Image courtesy Martina Minas-Nerpel.

So far, only Egyptian temples have been referred to, but numerous Classical monuments were built in Alexandria and the urban centers of the *chora*, too (Lembke et al. 2004, pp. 26–36, with references; see also Chapter 33). Buildings in Ptolemaic Alexandria had Doric and Ionic orders, which remained close to those in Greece itself. The forms of Classical architecture that developed in the new capital city look Greek on the surface, but were stimulated by the ideas provided by the local Egyptian architecture, as reflected in the mixed capitals (McKenzie 2007, pp. 115–118). These local traditions remained strong in the Roman Period, when local Classical architectural decoration coexists in Egypt with the architectural style of the Eastern Roman Empire, rather than being replaced by it. This pattern of development explains how skilled local architects produced high-quality architecture in the fourth to the sixth centuries AD, continuing Classical traditions into the Late Antique Period (McKenzie 2007, pp. 221–228).

34.4 Tombs and Their Decoration

Much of the known material culture of Greco-Roman Egypt comes from burial contexts, so that Egyptian funerary religion often dominates our view of the country. Funerary artifacts, however, do not correlate directly with identity or ethnicity, in either the Ptolemaic or the Roman Period (Riggs 2005, p. 23; Lembke 2004, pp. 51–65; see Chapter 23). The tomb of Petosiris in Tuna el-Gebel is a clear example of this complexity.

Tuna el-Gebel was the necropolis of Hermopolis, the capital of the fifteenth Upper Egyptian nome, which was an important administrative city and a religious center because of its temple of Thoth, whom the Greeks identified with Hermes. From the Twenty-Sixth Dynasty onward, animal mummies – mainly ibises and baboons – were buried in the underground galleries. In the Greco-Roman Period, the human burial ground was located near the sacred precinct of Thoth. The earliest tombs of considerable size were built for two priests of Thoth in around 300 BC: Petosiris (Lefebvre 1923–1924; Cherpion et al. 2007) and his elder brother, Djed-Thoth-iu-ef-ankh. Petosiris chose a place close to the temple in Tuna el-Gebel, and his tomb soon became a focal point for pilgrimage, with visitors carving graffiti in Greek and Demotic. His temple-like tomb reflects the impact of Greek art and culture on a native Egyptian. Petosiris and his family witnessed probably the last native rulers of the Thirtieth Dynasty, the Persian occupation, and the arrival of Alexander and the Ptolemies: a period of turmoil and transition that is alluded to in the autobiography engraved on the tomb's walls. Although the sanctuary of the bipartite tomb is mostly decorated in traditional Egyptian style, it is clearly innovative, and a sort of free variation of temple style. The pronaos shows strong Hellenistic influence, presenting a mixed Hellenizing art style with Egyptian and Greek elements, demonstrating that the native elite – in this case Petosiris – engaged with the new Hellenistic rulers and their style. The tomb's hybrid decoration is seen in a voluminous fringed mantle, which Petosiris, his male family members, other officials, and scribes are shown wearing (e.g. Cherpion et al. 2007, pp. 33, 36–38, 56, 80, etc.) and which has antecedents in the Late Period. Those who wear it are never engaged in manual work, so it signifies an elite lifestyle (Warda 2012, pp. 75–76).

Roughly four centuries later, another Petosiris, the owner of a tomb at Qaret el-Muzawwqa at the western end of the Dakhla Oasis (see Figure 23.3), was Roman in life but Egyptian in death (Osing et al. 1982, pp. 71–101; Whitehouse 1998). His tomb of the first century AD is rock-cut, consisting of two chambers, with a recess for the body; it more or less belongs to the Greco-Roman tradition, but is not as sophisticated as the *triclinium*-tombs of Roman Alexandria (e.g. Tigrane Pasha; Venit 2012, pp. 116–118). The tomb's religious function is expressed in traditional Egyptian iconography, executed in a conventional Egyptian style – although the Egyptian motifs and gods often seem poorly proportioned, betraying Hellenistic-Roman influence, especially in the use of foreshortening and the portrayal of generally Hellenistic-Roman dress. Although different from the mantle in the tomb of Petosiris in Tuna el-Gebel, this Petosiris' garment is as voluminously draped, and exemplifies the tomb's hybrid style. Whitehouse (1998, p. 253) states that “of the Greco-Roman tombs so far discovered in Egypt, that of Petosiris offers probably the most vivid evidence for that mixture of cultural and religious traditions which ... become a focus of interest in the study of post-pharaonic Egypt.” In the tomb of Petosiris, as well as that of Petubastis at Qaret el-Muzawwqa, the previously mentioned zodiac ceilings are found. Originally, astronomical ceilings were the preserve of temples and royal tombs, but a small group of funerary zodiacs demonstrate their privatization, ensuring an eternal cycle of rebirth (Whitehouse 1998, p. 264).

Categories of grave goods, such as mummy masks and funerary shrouds, have been extensively studied. Culturally mixed shrouds are a distinctive Roman Period category. The painted, full-length linen shrouds would have enveloped a mummified body, with the naturalistic Greek portrait head positioned directly over the face. The deceased is often depicted as Osiris, in the hope of their being rejuvenated. Shrouds vividly combine Greek and Egyptian elements, and decorative motifs with an origin in the Roman cultural milieu are likewise incorporated (Riggs 2005, esp. chapter 3, color pls. 6–9, 12). In this chapter, however, I mention only one unique item of grave good: an *icosahedron*-die. This regular polyhedron, formed by 20 equilateral triangles, was found at Qaret el-Muzawwqa in the 1980s and is now housed in the New Valley Museum at Kharga (Minas-Nerpel 2007). It is 5 cm high, 6 cm wide, and probably dates to the first century AD. In contrast to other *icosahedra* known from Greco-Roman Egypt, this one is not inscribed with Greek or Latin letters or numbers, but with 20 names of Egyptian divinities in Demotic, adapting Egyptian concepts to a Greek form. The piece provides striking evidence for the mixing of cultural traditions in Dakhla Oasis in the Roman Period, being anchored by its form to the Greco-Roman background and by the names of the gods and the Demotic script to the Egyptian tradition. The die was presumably used in an oracular procedure intended to establish which deity would provide help to the petitioner. These exceptional presentations in Dakhla suggest that such objects would have been widespread elsewhere but happen not to have been discovered.

34.5 The Ptolemaic Faience Wine-Jugs or *Oinochoai*

A truly unique object category of the Hellenistic world, limited to a period of about a century from Arsinoe II to Cleopatra I, is the faience *oinochoai*, also called “Berenike-jugs” or “Ptolemäerkannen.” Thompson (1973, p. 1), who published a comprehensive

study of these jugs and their decorations, characterizes them thus: “They face two ways; they look back at the Greek and forward to the Egyptianized ways of thinking.”

The form is well known from Greek pottery, with one handle at the back and a trefoil mouth for pouring. Greek *oinochoai* were usually made of painted terracotta, but Egyptian ones were made of greenish-blue “Egyptian faience,” a non-clay ceramic with a glaze; a material rather foreign to the Greek world. The bodies of faience *oinochoai*, usually around 30 cm high, always bear the same key representation: a rite executed by a Ptolemaic queen in Classical dress. The example discussed here (British Museum 1873,0820.389; cf. Thompson 1973, no. 1; Figure 34.4), shows Arsinoe II pouring a libation. The jug was probably made after Arsinoe’s death, but still during the lifetime of her husband Ptolemy II (270–246 BC), and is said to have been found at Canosa, Italy (Walker and Higgs 2001, no. 48). It has been restored from many fragments, and the bluish-green enamel of the surface is nearly all worn away. Traces of gilding, surviving on the Silenus masks at the handles and around the foot, suggest that the jug was intended as an imitation of similar vessels in precious material. The Silenus mask, a companion of the wine god Dionysus, may have reminded Egyptians of the god Bes. In the main relief, the queen is depicted in a frontal pose, with her head turned toward a horned altar. She stands on a base holding out in her right hand a large *phiale*, a libation bowl. Her left hand supports a double cornucopia, symbol of abundance;



Figure 34.4 Faience wine-jug or *oinochoe*, showing Arsinoe II. Source: British Museum 1873,0820.389. © Trustees of the British Museum.

other queens mostly hold a single cornucopia. Arsinoe, whose hair is in Greek style, is draped in garments that were worn by fashionable Greek women of the third century BC: a long tunic (*chiton*) and an outer garment (*himation*) twisted around the waist in a thick fold. Behind her is a *baitulos*, a sacred pillar, decorated with garlands. On the shoulder, the jug bears a Greek inscription wishing great good fortune on Arsinoe II.

These jugs were probably used in rituals associated with the ruler cult established under Ptolemy II Philadelphus to pour libations in honor of the depicted queen over altars (Pfeiffer 2008b, pp. 62–64), especially during the posthumous cult festival for Arsinoe II. The *oinochoai* were invented for this cult (see Chapter 27), and adopted under the following Ptolemaic queens, whether they were executing or receiving the offering (Grimm 1998, pp. 78–79; Walker and Higgs 2001, p. 69). Although the faience *oinochoai* are not attested after Cleopatra I (c. 204–176 BC), the tradition of making decorated faience vessels (even decorated with faience heads, mostly of gods) continued well into the Roman Period (Ashton 2003a, p. 337, 2003b, pp. 50, 53–58).

34.6 The Visual Identity of Arsinoe II Philadelphus

The *oinochoai* emphasize Arsinoe Philadelphus' highly exceptional position, of which I will now explore further visual aspects. Arsinoe II was the daughter of Ptolemy I Soter, the founder of the Ptolemaic dynasty, and the sister and wife of Ptolemy II Philadelphus. She was married three times to three different kings, a fact that was perhaps in itself not so spectacular in the fast-moving Early Hellenistic Period. That her second husband, Ptolemy Ceraunus, was her half-brother, and especially that her third, Ptolemy II Philadelphus, was her full brother, was however sensational, and changed the position and perception of Ptolemaic queens fundamentally (see Chapter 3). Her new status was expressed in text and in material culture, including in temple offering scenes, stelae, statues, coins, and other sources. During her lifetime, Arsinoe II became critical to the projection of the image of the Ptolemaic dynasty, and her importance only increased after her death.

The Ptolemies not only adopted the presentation of Hellenistic rulers, but also became Egyptian pharaohs, appropriating pharaonic traditions and styles, as can most clearly be seen in the Egyptian temples. Their public display as Egyptian rulers will have held great attraction for the Ptolemies, whose six monumental statues (up to 12 m high) greeted every foreigner landing in the harbor of Alexandria (Empereur 1998, pp. 76–77; Pfrommer 2002, pp. 29–32). Ptolemy II Philadelphus put much emphasis on the Egyptian perception and display of his kingship, for the benefit not only of the Egyptian population but also of the Hellenistic oecumene. In order to attract the Greek population and to bind it to the Egyptian, Ptolemy I either instigated or at least actively promoted the cult of the Greco-Egyptian god Sarapis (Pfeiffer 2008a; see Chapter 28), which came to be of great importance for the elite and their identification with the country. Ptolemy II went a step further and introduced an official ruler cult: Ptolemaic propaganda developed the king into a god-king who was accorded a divine cult together with his consort. The Egyptian pharaoh, although his office was divine, had never been the object of such worship (Hölbl 2001, pp. 90–92; Pfeiffer 2008a, p. 388, 2008b, pp. 31–73; see Chapter 27). The *oinochoai* discussed earlier were probably used in this ruler cult and during its festivals.

Ptolemy II took an important step shortly before Arsinoe's death, associating himself and his sister-wife with the cult of Alexander, and thus seeking divinity for the "Brother-Sister Gods" (*Theoi Adelphoi*), as attested by altars and other objects (Lembke 2012b, pp. 210–211; e.g. the altar placed in the Serapeum of Alexandria, Sabottka 2008, pp. 50–64). Their epithet referred to the sibling marriage, which was meant to be understood as a "holy wedlock" (*hieros gamos*) of Zeus and Hera, celebrated by Theocritus in his *encomium* of Ptolemy II (*Idylls* 17); for the indigenous Egyptian population, this union could relate to Osiris and Isis. The "Brother-Sister Gods" thus absorbed both Greek and Egyptian mythology (Lembke 2012b, pp. 209–211; Carney 2013, pp. 49–64).

Shortly after her death, Arsinoe received her own eponymous cult in Alexandria, performed by a priestess called the *kanephoros*, "basket-carrier" (Minas 2000, pp. 93–96). Although attested only in written sources connected to the Greek ruler cult, the priestess seems to have been depicted on a purely Egyptian monument: the lunette of the Mendes Stele (Egyptian Museum Cairo, CG 22181; Kamal 1904, pls. LIV–LV; Schäfer 2011, pp. 239–276). In 265/4, Ptolemy, the son and co-regent of Ptolemy II, who set himself against his father, performed the dedication of a temple in Mendes. He is depicted behind the royal couple in the left or royal half of the lunette. On the right, the deities are shown: the Ram of Mendes, Harpokrates; the deceased Ram of Mendes in anthropomorphic form, Hatmehit; and the new co-templar goddess, the deceased Arsinoe II. Upon her death in 270, she had been deified as an Egyptian goddess, which meant that her statues would now be placed in sanctuaries all over Egypt beside the main god or goddess as a guest-goddess, a "temple-sharing deity" (*synnaos thea*). On the royal side of the Mendes Stele, the *kanephoros* seems to take her place in the depiction of the royal family performing the rituals (Minas 1998).

Ptolemy II is depicted venerating his deified sister and wife in temple reliefs and stelae (Quaegebeur 1971a, 1971b). One example is a rectangular limestone temple relief from San el-Hagar/Tanis (British Museum EA 1056: 42 cm high, 34 cm wide; Figure 34.5). Arsinoe II is shown on the divine side, facing Ptolemy II, who wears the double crown and holds a *was*-scepter in his right hand. His left hand is raised above his shoulder and holds a thunderbolt. This symbol is the only Hellenistic component in an otherwise purely Egyptian scene, and it identifies Ptolemy II with Zeus, the almighty god of the sky, whose symbol is the thunderbolt, and who is so aptly described by Cleanthes in a hymn as holding the "two-edged, lightning-forked thunderbolt" in his "invincible hand." Cleanthes of Assus in Lydia, born around the time of Alexander's conquest of Egypt, was a Stoic philosopher and disciple of Zenon. Since Stoic philosophers had great influence at the Ptolemaic court, it is understandable that this detail should find its way into an Egyptian temple as a symbol of Ptolemy II (Minas-Nerpel 2015, pp. 105–109).

Arsinoe II, identified on the Tanis relief by two names in a cartouche, wears a unique crown, composed of strategically chosen elements that set her clearly apart from other royal women. The crown is placed on a tripartite wig and a vulture headdress, to which a uraeus is attached at the forehead. The parts of this symbol, termed a "symbol of authority" by Nilsson (2012, pp. 148–150), demonstrate her association with various deities, kings, and queens, and the whole serves as a manifestation of the Egyptian divine world and its legacy (Nilsson 2012, pp. 16–35). The main elements are the red crown, often placed on ram's horns, but not on the Tanis relief; a double-feather plume,

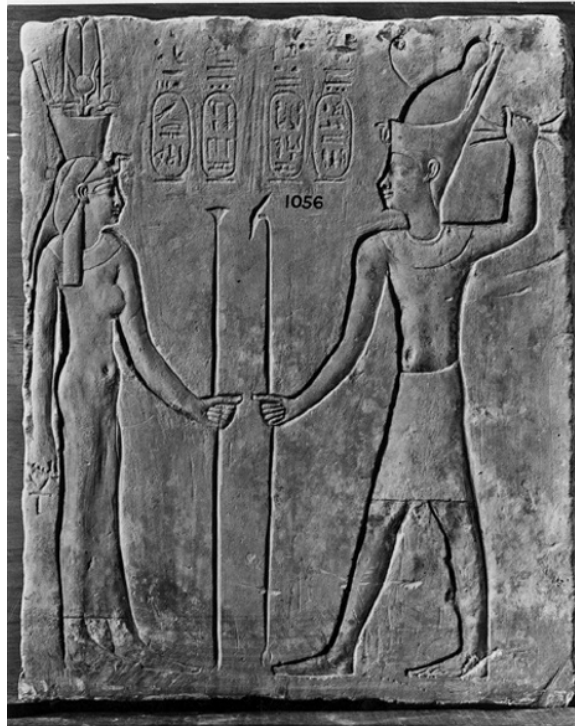


Figure 34.5 Relief from San el-Hagar (Tanis), showing Ptolemy II Philadelphus and Arsinoe II Philadelphus. Source: British Museum EA 1056. © Trustees of the British Museum.

identical to those incorporated in the traditional Egyptian crown worn by queens, goddesses, and the Divine Adoratrices of Amun; and cow horns and a solar disc, this being a traditional Hathoric crown, again worn by queens and goddesses. Arsinoe's visual identity is thus a mixture of traditions and new creations that merge to her specific symbol. Although on the Tanis relief she wears a very simple, tight-fitting dress, she can be depicted with very elaborate clothing closely related to the Isis dress, for example on a bilingual stele dedicated by the pastophorus-priest Totoes in a private collection (Albersmeier and Minas 1998), on which the deified Arsinoe II faces a deity, now lost except for the lunar crown, with whom the queen shared a temple. This dress, which combines Egyptian traditions and Hellenistic innovation (Albersmeier 2002, pp. 85–105, 2004, pp. 421–432), is closely related to the one worn by queens in “ancestor scenes” in Ptolemaic Period temples, in which the king is dressed in the mantle discussed earlier. Elite women could also wear the Isis dress, but this is attested only for the Late Ptolemaic and Early Roman Periods, as exemplified by the stele of Tayimhotep, wife of Pasherentah III, the High Priest of Ptah (42 BC; British Museum EA 147; cf. Walker and Higgs 2001, pp. 186–187, cat. 193). At Tuna el-Gebel, the daughters of Petosiris and other females are depicted dressed in forerunners of the Isis dress (see e.g. Cherpion et al. 2007, pp. 83, 126–127, 138); the tomb also has examples of the specific male mantle (see earlier).

In view of the intimation that Arsinoe II was worshiped as a “temple-sharing deity” in every single Egyptian temple, very few statues of her survive (Albersmeier 2002, pp. 177–182). A well-preserved example, clearly identified by an inscription, is in the Museo Gregoriano Egizio in the Vatican (22681; Albersmeier 2002, cat. no. 26). It dates after her death but still during the lifetime of Ptolemy II. One of the most extraordinary images of Arsinoe II must have been planned for her sanctuary on Cape Zephyrion east of Alexandria; the admiral Callicrates of Samos had financed it, probably while she was still alive. This temple, where Arsinoe was worshiped as Aphrodite, also contained a mechanical drinking horn in the shape of the Egyptian god Bes that made music (McKenzie 2007, p. 33, 52). As Pfrommer (2002, pp. 61–69) has shown, a “floating” statue was to be positioned in the center of the temple, suspended by magnetic fields, but this project was probably never finished. This would have been a showpiece of visual and technical creativity in a Classical temple that also included Egyptian features.

34.7 The End of Pharaonic Culture and Traditions

According to tradition, St. Mark established Christianity in Alexandria in the mid-first century AD, but only by the mid-fourth century did his martyrdom in the eastern part of the city become a place of pilgrimage. The city’s first cathedral, the church of Theonas, was built in 300–311 (McKenzie 2007, p. 231). The end of the fourth century saw rioting between Christians and pagans that resulted in the destruction of the Serapeum in 391, marking the end of a salient pagan presence in the city. Egyptian temples and stelae in the *chora* continued to be decorated on a small scale into the third and the beginning of the fourth centuries. The latest known cartouche of a Roman emperor in a temple was inscribed under Maximinus Daia (305–313) on blocks belonging to the temple of Horus at Tahta, located on the west bank of the Nile, north of Athribis (Hölbl 2000, p. 45, n.177, p. 114, figure 157). Egyptian stelae decorated in the traditional native style and inscribed in Hieroglyphs continued to be set up in Egyptian temples, for example in the Bucheum at Arment, where the latest known example is dated to 340, the 57th year of the era of Diocletian (Goldbrunner 2004, pp. 78–79, 302; Hölbl 2000, p. 45, n.178). This demonstrates that Egyptian temples continued to function during the period when large churches began to be erected.

By the fifth century, pagan cults were largely outlawed and Christianity was in plain sight, with the great churches and monasteries dominating the landscape (Heinen 1998, p. 37). The temple of Isis at Philae, where Hieroglyphs were carved in the temple of Harendotes as late as 394 (Winter 1982, p. 1023), was the last to be kept open, being closed down under Justinian between 535 and 537, when it was converted into a church (see Dijkstra 2008). New creative trends developed, in architecture, sculpture, ceramics, terracottas, textiles, and other media (for an overview, see Krause 1998; Lembke et al. 2004). The term “Coptic” is applied not only to the language but also to the art and architecture of Late Antique Egypt (see Box 19.1). Byzantine rule in Egypt, which started in AD 330 when Constantinople was made the imperial capital of the East, ceased with the Arab conquest of Alexandria in 642, bringing further new visual trends and styles.

34.8 Conclusion

The changes in art that developed in the Ptolemaic and Roman Periods should be seen not as a decline in culture but as a sign of ongoing vitality and creativity, often imbued with the influences of several peoples. Traditional Egyptian styles continued in many areas, and Hellenizing as well as hybrid forms developed, which are displayed in tombs and temples, pottery and jewelry, mosaics and coins, etc. The multiethnic population and cross-cultural influences led to new artistic expressions in Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt. Often, the political and sociocultural situation was reflected in material culture, as is exemplified by the visual identity of Arsinoe II Philadelphus. Late Antiquity too should be seen not as a period of decline but as another era of metamorphosis, as pointed out by Heinen (1998, p. 37): “Die Spätantike ist also nicht so sehr die letzte Phase eines langen Niederganges als vielmehr eine in vielerlei Hinsicht glänzende, anziehende Epoche, die eine Metamorphose durchlebte und Entwicklungen von lang andauernder Wirkung in Gang setzte.”

FURTHER READING

The *Oxford Handbook of Roman Egypt*, edited by Riggs (2012), gives a valuable comprehensive survey of Roman Egypt, including many developments of Ptolemaic Egypt. Riggs also covers the funerary aspects of Roman Egypt and approaches the question of identity in her monograph *The Beautiful Burial in Roman Egypt* (2005). Baines (2007, 2014) and Robins (1997) examine ancient art and discuss its purpose and status. For the architectural developments of Greco-Roman Egypt, refer to McKenzie’s book on Alexandria (2007) and Arnold’s on the Egyptian temples (1999). The victory stele of Gallus exemplifies the unity of both text and image, the transition from a Hellenistic empire to a Roman province, and the interconnections of Egyptian, Hellenistic, and Roman culture (Hoffmann et al. 2009). Lembke et al. (2004) offers an overview of Egypt’s cultural development in the Roman Period, while Bagnall and Rathbone (2004) provide a guide to archeological sites dating from Alexander the Great to Christian times. For an overview of Coptic art and architecture, see Capuani (2002); for the Coptic culture more generally, see Krause (1998).

PART VIII

EPILOGUE

CHAPTER THIRTY-FIVE

The People of Greco-Roman Egypt: Quality of Life

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Egypt's natural riches, the high yields of its crops, and the resulting taxes were a blessing to its rulers. The Ptolemies readily showed their wealth and embraced the ideal of *tryphē*, “luxuriousness,” as did their divine ancestor Dionysus (see Chapter 26). The country became the granary of Rome and Constantinople. No other society in Antiquity yields so much detail on its fiscal system (see Chapter 10). Scholars often pity Egypt's taxpayers, as Claire Préaux does in her book on the Ptolemaic fiscal system: “l'économie royale était tout entière coordonnée en vue d'enrichir le roi” (Préaux 1939, p. 569). But does the large number of taxes imply that the tax burden was heavy, or that people were discontent about government policy and life? The 2016 World Happiness Report ranked Denmark as the happiest country on earth, despite collecting more than 55% of its gross domestic product as taxes, making it one of most heavily taxed nations. Happiness, or well-being, is based on more than just economic indicators; health, social networks, security, education, and other determinants are also crucial. Happiness has become a popular subject in a range of fields (e.g. applied economics), and has generated independent subdisciplines like the “economics of happiness,” combining economics with fields such as psychology and sociology (e.g. Decancq et al. 2015, discussing whether and how welfare economics should incorporate insights from happiness and satisfaction studies). Despite this, happiness studies have hardly penetrated the research of historians.

35.1 Defining Quality of Life

Quality of life is to be distinguished from instant or passing happiness, determined by the ups and downs of one's day-to-day joys and burdens. A person can be very happy on his wedding day, but miserable on the days that ensue because his mother is ill. Instant (un)happiness is today examined through questionnaires, while for Greco-Roman Egypt we can partly rely on letters: Greek and Coptic letters are most informative, whereas Demotic letters rarely display emotions, and only in a controlled way. Women's letters are often more interspersed with emotional utterances than are men's (see Bagnall and Cribiore 2006 on women's letters; Depauw 2006 on Demotic letters). The search for instant (un)happiness is closely linked to the new field of emotions in the papyri, discussing the causes (e.g. an ill child) and types (e.g. shame or anger) of (un)happiness, as well as lexicographical aspects (one may simply salute the addressee with "greetings," or one may offer "many greetings" or "very many greetings"; e.g. P.Oxy. III 528: *pleista chairein*). Emotions can be used or abused in petitions, or may be laid bare in magical spells that appeal for supernatural intervention, or in votive figurines from pilgrimage shrines (on emotions in papyri, see Kotsifou 2012). The papyri show a wide range of emotions (Clarysse 2017), although love letters are, unexpectedly, rare, probably due to a lack of privacy: since most women could not read or write, letters had to be written for them and read aloud to them.

This chapter focuses on objective quality of life or well-being, or to use Veenhoven's (2000) phrasing, "the degree to which a life meets explicit standards of the good life, as assessed by an impartial outsider" (e.g. by a historian/researcher). Objective quality of life is to be distinguished from subjective quality of life, or "self-appraisal based on implicit criteria". Unlike instant happiness, happiness in the sense of quality of life has remained largely unexplored in papyrology (Vandorpe 2013b). How are we to proceed? Veenhoven (2000) proposes a taxonomy of quality of life (Figure 35.1), in which one of the binary categories is that of (a) *life chances* versus (b) *life results*, or (a) the chances that an environment offers the individual or a group to effectively navigate life versus (b) the eventual feelings of (dis)contentment with one's own life that result.

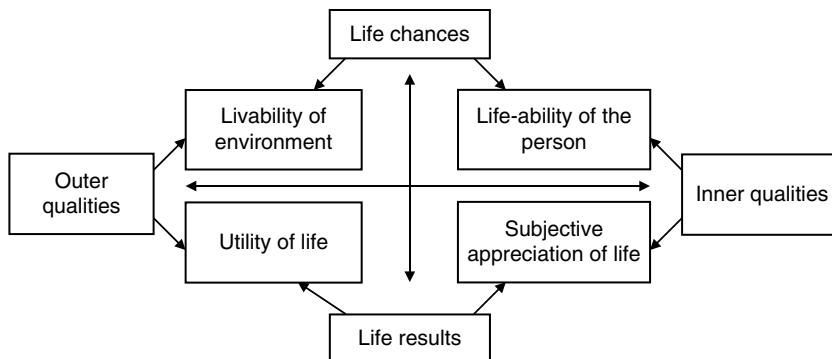


Figure 35.1 The taxonomy of quality of life, as described by Veenhoven (2000). Source: courtesy Valérie Wyns, cf. Wyns 2018.

Governments can only directly impact life chances, while life results – where the personal actions and feelings of the individual are freely at play – are mainly out of their grasp. The category of life chances is further subdivided in *livability of the environment* (the degree to which the environment allows the individual to live comfortably and securely, e.g. restrictions on CO₂ emissions to improve air quality) versus *life-ability of the person* (the way an individual is able to successfully manage his or her own life). A government can have more impact on the livability of the environment, since this implies action and investment in a person's surroundings, than on the personal (private) sphere. Extensive sociological research has resulted in the clarification of the abstract term "life chances" and has produced concrete determinants of quality of life, such as health, employment, and education. Since the publication of the first Happiness Report in 2012, a growing number of governments have started taking these results into account in their domestic policy, beginning with the kingdom of Bhutan. The United Arab Emirates even appointed a Minister of Happiness in 2016, who is charged with overseeing the promotion of a happier society.

Quality of life draws on universal grounds, and hence most of its determinants are cross-cultural. Nevertheless, the relevance of the determinants may differ between cultures and times (Veenhoven 2012): most determinants hold up, for instance, in both Europe and Asia, but religiosity seems to have a larger impact on life satisfaction in Asia than in Europe, due to the Asian "experience-oriented" religions, which offer rituals and practices "that promote feelings of joy and pleasure, and thus contribute to life satisfaction" (Jagodzinski 2010, p. 101). There is no consensus on which set of determinants is most suitable for comparing quality of life across cultures. Several indices have been developed, including the Physical Quality of Life Index (PQLI), the International Wellbeing Index (IWI), and the Happiness Index, discussed in 2012 in a detailed report by the Earth Institute of the Columbia University in collaboration with the London School of Economics.

A large array of cross-cultural determinants can be employed, including physical and mental health, social networks, employment, education, security, freedom, access to religious experience, services, and infrastructure (water supply, health services, roads, etc.), but in general those closely related to basic human biological needs always hold capital importance – or, to put it negatively, economic growth and prosperity do not necessarily drive up happiness.

While cross-cultural comparisons of happiness are popular in modern research, only a few attempts have been made to apply quality-of-life determinants and indices to history. Jordan (1993, 1996, 2009, 2010) presents the types of sources (e.g. census data) and methods required to examine the quality of life of seventeenth- and nineteenth-century inhabitants of Dublin and a selection of cities from England and Wales, for which he developed the Victorian Index of Quality of Adult Life (VICQUAL Index). Due to his material, Jordan puts a heavy emphasis on the importance of health (and mortality), financial capital, and the number of hearths per family. According to a study on quality of life over three centuries of French history by Ostroot and Snyder (1996), the most cited determinant affecting human well-being is interpersonal relations (apart from food and shelter, health, security, and salvation in Catholic France); this study departs from the development of the previously mentioned PQLI. Studies in historical anthropology present an extra dimension to our research: human happiness in general

seems to have markedly dropped after the transition from a hunter-gatherer to an agrarian society, only to rise again after the Industrial Revolution of the eighteenth century (see Maryanski and Turner 1992; Sanderson 1995).

35.2 A Happiness Index for Greco-Roman Egypt

Before exploring the research perspectives of the new sociological approach, a list of determinants influencing the quality of life and concretizing the life chances of people living in Greco-Roman Egypt is needed: a so-called “happiness index” or “index of quality of life.” As for Victorian Britain or Catholic France, an adapted quality-of-life index should be developed for Egypt, a preliminary version of which has already been proposed (Vandorpe 2013b; Wyns 2018). As most determinants have a cross-cultural value, many of the modern (sub)determinants may be adopted. Others are to be added, such as cultural diversity and resilience, and the prospect of adequate burial, which are not always explicitly present in cross-cultural happiness studies in modern times. Still others are to be rejected, because they are related to modern technology (e.g. the availability of electricity).

We propose six main categories, each subdivided into several specific determinants (Table 35.1, column 1). For most of these specific determinants, we have extensive data for Greco-Roman Egypt, as discussed elsewhere in this companion (Table 35.1, column 2).

The *Government* determinant encompasses good governance, by investments in institutions and administration, by allowing people to participate in government, by ensuring security, or by providing services and infrastructure such as bank infrastructure, notarial offices, temple buildings, and so on. The *Economy* determinant includes employment, income, housing, and burying. The *Social life* and *Culture* determinants include the presence or absence of familial and social networks, gender equality, cultural tolerance toward minorities (ethnic equality), level of education, and knowledge of values (distinction of good vs. bad, etc.). The *Physical and Mental Health* determinant includes physical health (safe birth, etc.), the ability to express emotions, and psychological well-being derived from satisfaction at work, religion, or spirituality. The *Environment* determinant includes the success or absence of the Nile inundations, the consequences of urbanization, and wildlife damage to crops.

What perspectives does a quality of life research open for Greco-Roman Egypt, and for Antiquity in general?

35.3 Happiness Studies: Research Perspectives for Greco-Roman Egypt

35.3.1 *The Dominant Determinants for Greco-Roman Egypt*

As for Victorian England or Catholic France (see earlier), we can, to a certain extent, check which determinants had a strong impact on quality of life in Egypt. That research has only been done in part, but some conclusions can be drawn. Among the dominant indicators are people’s assets (Table 35.1, no. 9), including movables and real estate.

Table 35.1 Index of quality of life for Greco-Roman Egypt.

<i>Determinant</i>	<i>Available data for Egypt, with reference to chapters in this volume</i>
<i>Government</i>	
1. Government performance	1. Institutions and administration (Chapters 7 and 8)
2. Services and infrastructure	2. Monetization and bank infrastructure (Chapter 14), notarial offices (Chapter 12), roads and agricultural infrastructure, mining, etc. (Chapter 15), temple-building (Chapter 26)
3. Political/critical/constructive participation	3. Participation in the <i>poleis</i> (Chapters 7 and 8), advisory council of rulers (Chapter 9), elite participation (Chapter 18) including the priestly elite (Chapter 26), social mobility (Chapter 18)
4. Justice/absence of corruption	4. Possibilities for petitioning (Chapters 7 and 8)
5. Personal freedom	5. Situation of slaves (Chapter 18)
6. (Perceived) safety, at home and when traveling	6 and 7. Deployment of army and police (Chapter 11), lack of system stability (revolts, external attacks) (Chapters 3–5)
7. System stability/peace	
<i>Economy</i>	
8. Adequate and safe housing	8. House types, roofing, etc. (Chapter 23), fragmentation of houses
9. Assets (movables and real estate)	9. Land, livestock, jewelry, etc. (Chapter 16; Chapter 12 on protection of assets by legal documents)
10. Income p/c and tax burden	10. Average income (Chapter 16), types of taxes and tax burden (Chapter 10)
11. (Un)employment	11. Entrepreneurship (Chapter 16), part-time jobs including priestly functions (Chapters 17 and 26)
12. Productivity	12. Estimations of future harvest/production yield (Chapter 10), investments to increase productivity (Chapter 16)
13. Prospect of adequate burial	13. Tomb decoration, mummy portraits (Chapter 23), mummification, funerary rituals (Chapter 26)
<i>Social life</i>	
14. Significant primary relationships (core family, marriage)	14. Composition of families (Chapter 21)
15. Familial and social networks	15. Someone to turn to in case of problems, pregnancy, etc. (Chapter 21), membership of associations
16. Social support and social capital (donations to a community, volunteer work, etc.)	16. Acts of euergetism, liturgies (Chapter 4), private donations to a temple (Chapter 26), sponsoring of a festival
17. Gender equality	17. Role of women compared to men (Chapter 22)

(Continued)

Table 35.1 (Continued)

<i>Determinant</i>	<i>Available data for Egypt, with reference to chapters in this volume</i>
<i>Culture</i>	
18. Level of appropriate education/literacy/knowledge of local myths, traditions	18. Greek and Egyptian education, level of literacy (Chapters 24 and 31)
19. Artisan skills	19. Creativity in art (Chapter 34)
20. Notion of values/ideal expression	20. Expressions of ideology by rulers (Chapter 7), distinction good vs. bad (see letters and petitions)
21. Cultural diversity and resilience (continuation of own traditions, native language, etc.)	21. Tolerance or absence of tolerance toward ethnic/cultural groups (Chapters 19 and 20), continuation or abolition of traditions/language in legal documents (Chapter 12)
<i>Physical and mental health</i>	
22. Physical health (life expectancy, disability, safe birth, adequate nutritional food and water)	22. A sound body and mind (Chapter 24)
23. Psychological well-being	23. Idem.
24. Possibility to express emotions	24. Expression of emotions in letters and petitions (see this chapter, earlier)
25. Access to spirituality and/or religious experience	25. Accessibility of gods, religious festivals (Chapters 26–30), magical texts (Chapter 28)
26. Critical autonomy	26. Critical attitude toward the government as expressed in literature (Potter's oracle, Chapter 31), religious freedom or its absence (Christian persecutions, abolition of paganism) (Chapter 29)
27. Appropriate child care and security in childhood	27. Infant exposure, marriage at an (in)appropriate age (Chapter 21)
<i>Environment</i>	
28. Ecological issues (climate, etc.)	28. Problematic Nile inundations (Chapter 15), drying up of Fayum borders (Chapters 15 and 17), consequences of volcanic eruptions (Manning 2018)
29. Urbanization issues	29. Urbanization and consequences (Chapter 33)
30. Wildlife damage to crops	30. Wildlife damage to crops

Census data and contracts show that much attention is paid to a person's possessions. But these types of documents have an official character, and the emphasis on assets is partly determined by what the government considers important. However, texts of a more private nature, such as oracle questions and oracle books, confirm the trend: there, most questions are about property (purchase, sale, inheritance, theft, etc.) (Naether 2010; Vandorpe 2013b). The oracle book of Astrampsychus, for example, has among its questions "Will I find what is lost?", "Will I inherit from my wife/my mother/my father?", and "If I borrow money, will I lose it?" The answers vary from "You will inherit, but not all," to "Do not lend for you will lose money," to "Your goods will not be auctioned, do not be afraid" (Naether 2010).

It is not only the wide array of legal documents protecting personal property that testify to the importance the people of Egypt attached to their assets (Chapter 12), but also numerous inventory lists of all kinds. When people shipped goods or deposited them, they might use seals (many people had a seal ring) or make a – sometimes very detailed – inventory list. A suitcase with his clothes was forwarded to Zenon, who was traveling in the Delta with the finance minister’s staff; the package was accompanied by a detailed list of garments, stating what color they had and whether they were new, washed, worn, or half-worn (P.Cair. Zen. I 59092; Sel.Pap. I 182). In other lists, the exact value is indicated for all or for the more expensive goods (P.Petr.² I 13; P.Dryton 38). A report of a robbery in the houses of Lady Herais describes the murder of three people in just five lines, but devotes 34 to the list of stolen goods (P.Hamb. I 10). The most popular movable assets, according to these inventory lists, were gold and silver items (mainly jewelry), textiles (clothing and bedding), household utensils (of bronze, iron, wood, etc.) and imported products such as herbs and spices.

For the other main determinants, we have to turn again to oracle questions and oracle books (further research is needed here, incorporating also complaints and private letters). The previously discussed first place taken by assets is in fact shared with (un)employment (no. 11), as is to be expected in times when retirement pay, minimum wage, and social services did not exist – although temples and monasteries played a socioeconomic role that should not be underestimated (see Chapters 18 and 26). A combination of jobs and a real entrepreneurial spirit were important keys to employment in Egypt (see Chapter 17). The oracle of Astrampsychus shows that (un)employment was a major concern, listing questions such as “Will I serve in the army?”, “Will I make a promotion?”, “Will I become a notary/*oikonomos*?”, “Will I be appointed priest?”, and “Will I become a bishop?”, and answers such as “You will become priest, but not immediately,” “You will become a general, you will do well and you will enjoy it,” “You will become an *oikonomos* and someone will be jealous of you,” and “It’s not your destiny to become a bishop. Give up all hope” (Naether 2010).

Other top-five determinants, according to the oracle business, were physical health (no. 22), safety when traveling (Government determinant, no. 6), and family life (Social Life determinant, nos. 14 and 15) (Naether 2010; Vanderpe 2013b).

Absence of personal freedom or slavery (Government determinant, no. 5) receives hardly any attention in the sources of Greco-Roman Egypt. In ancient times, there was no notion of fundamental human rights (although people respected some of these rights, such as the humane treatment of prisoners of war). Slavery also did not disappear with the advent of Christianity. Even priests and monks owned, bought, and sold slaves. If there were any complaints about slavery, they concerned free people who were taken prisoner of war during turbulent periods, or whose children had been enslaved due to debts – a major problem in Late Antique Egypt. Hence, parents often desperately sent letters to Christian communities asking for financial assistance. Prisoners of war were sometimes bought free in large numbers by monasteries (see Chapter 18).

35.3.2 A More Person-Oriented Approach

Papyrological documentation is ideally suited to studying the personal life of humans, but if one puts the happiness indices alongside the current historical research, there are some discrepancies. Studies still start too often from institutions and abstract concepts, and too

little from the people. For example, there is a lot of research into all kinds of professions, or the income or status of professions. But did people always have a job? Did the many taxes that are so extensively studied mean that the people had to pay large sums? Measuring the tax burden of Greco-Roman Egypt is not an easy task, but it is possible using the “representative taxpayers approach”; that is, starting from representative individuals (Atrostic and Nunns 1991; Vandorpe 2013b).

35.3.3 *A New Approach to the Evaluation of Government Performance*

To date, government performance in Greco-Roman Egypt has been evaluated on the basis of a limited and variable set of determinants; the choice of these determinants is sometimes justified within the framework of a theoretical model. In particular, much research has been done for the Ptolemaic state, because Egypt was at that time the core of the empire. For later periods, the evaluation should be embedded within the larger context of the Roman and Byzantine world. For the Ptolemaic Period, a more optimistic view emphasizes investments in temple construction (Table 35.1, no. 2) or in Alexandrian scholarship and literature (no. 18), while the more pessimistic one (which prevailed for a long time) stresses “structural weaknesses” and “overactive fiscal policies” (Manning 2010, pp. 30–34). Recently, there has been a tendency to rehabilitate the Ptolemaic state (e.g. von Reden 2007; Bauschatz 2013). Manning (2010) argues for a relatively successful state even after the “golden age” of the third century BC. Within the setting of premodern states, he adopts a “bargained incorporation model,” showing that the kings successfully bargained with the elite groups (no. 3), thus establishing an equilibrium and enabling revenue capture.

Happiness studies show that the quality of life of a population depends on a much larger and more stable set of (sub)determinants than the ones used up to now. In order to evaluate a government, investments in all (sub)determinants of the happiness index should be considered. The previously proposed index is not normative, but expresses objective observations as determinants of conditions that make people “happy.” Notwithstanding chronological and geographical lacunas, one can discover in which domains the government did or did not invest, and it is possible to establish a relative scale if one pays due attention to shifts, and to their historical context. Shifts in infrastructural investments (no. 2) are for instance attested, such as the boom of camps in Upper Egypt in the 160s BC, where locals could serve in the Ptolemaic army (Chapter 11), or the decline of investments in local temple-building and restoration from the reign of Marcus Aurelius onward (Chapter 26).

What types of investment should be considered? We will discuss briefly the subdeterminants Safety (no. 6) and Assets, including Movables and Real Estate (no. 9) as examples.

Safety is a hot topic even today. In Antiquity, safe traveling was something that people were concerned about, as already shown by the previously discussed oracle business. The cavalry officer Dryton, for example, complains that he “constantly runs risks on the road” when traveling to his property in Thebes and the Pathyrite nome (P.Dryton 32, 137–130 BC), while his daughters have a similar problem 20 years later during a period of

unrest (P.Dryton 34); in Roman times, commercial roads in the desert received constant protection by the army. When it was not safe even at home, people waited impatiently for the army to arrive, as is also evident from Dryton's archive, where his son refers in a letter to the approaching military forces of the Thebaid (P.Dryton 36), or when during the Jewish revolt of AD 115–117 acquaintances of Apollonios the *strategos* hoped for the arrival of the prefect's legion (P.Bremen 1; CPJ II 438). While nowadays intelligence services play a crucial role in security strategies, in Antiquity safety was mainly guaranteed by a standing army and the police.

Some actual figures of investments circulate in ancient sources, such as the 8000 talents spent for the recruitment of mercenaries in the early reign of Ptolemy son of Lagus (Fischer-Bovet 2014, p. 52). According to a rough estimate, the first two Ptolemies spent 80–90% of their total budget for the military in wartime, including on a fleet that was three to six times larger than that of the Seleucids (Fischer-Bovet 2014, pp. 49–85). Military investments were out of control, but eventually became balanced again by the introduction of the cleruchic system, whereby a soldier was compensated with a plot of land (see Chapter 11). For the reclamation of some of these plots, the government had to invest in the local irrigation system, but in the long term this represented a lower investment level.

In Upper Egypt, the cleruchic system was not successful (P.Haun. IV 70, pp. 39–43). Local soldiers were mobilized there – all together perhaps some 10 000, who were paid in money and kind, and for whom, especially under Ptolemies VI and VIII, garrisons were founded. However, these soldiers were often only employed part time, or – in financially difficult periods in the later Ptolemaic period – even remained unemployed. The cost of the army thus decreases from the reign of Ptolemy III, only to temporarily rise again under Ptolemies VI and VIII. Ptolemaic militaries in general, whether cleruchs or soldiers receiving pay, enjoyed tax privileges. In Roman times, wage costs fluctuated according to the number of soldiers protecting Egypt, with a decrease after Augustus' reign, and a further decrease in the second century, followed by a new growth of military power in the fourth (see Chapter 11). The system of donating land during or after a military career was abolished after Augustus, and from the reign of Tiberius onward all legionary and auxiliary soldiers received a wage. Roman soldiers did not enjoy tax privileges as such, but after 25 or 26 years of service, local soldiers (and, until AD 140, also their children) were granted Roman citizenship (see Box 13.1); Greeks were granted citizenship when entering the army. Parts of these investments were recovered, as some of the police tasks performed by the army generated income for the state, such as the guarding of the desert roads.

In conclusion, investments in the standing army fluctuated, as expected, and took the form of payroll, land donations, tax reduction for soldiers, the building and maintenance of garrisons, and/or the granting of citizenship.

The importance of the exact recording and protection of assets has already been demonstrated by the example of the oracle questions and inventory lists. The people of Ptolemaic Egypt took great care to describe their property minutely, as is exemplified by a Theban marriage contract of 226 BC (P.Recueil 7), where the new husband Melas first records the endowments he made on his wife Senobastis as a bridal gift, and includes the amount of money she would receive extra in case of divorce. He continues by listing the goods his new spouse brought with her when she moved into the

house, and includes their approximate value: a shawl worth 1 deben, 6 kite (or 32 drachmas), a coat worth 2.5 kite (or 5 drachmas), and so on. Melas promises in the contract to return these goods or their approximate value to Senobastis in case of divorce. The amount of detail involved in the contract already conveys the importance of written documentation in Egyptian society. A number of court cases involving property disputes have been preserved, mostly in private archives, such as the Erbstreit case (P.Erbstreit). As today, inheritances often caused problems among family members. In the Erbstreit case, the dispute revolved around the intended heirs of the possessions of the deceased woman Tamenos, whose daughters had to fight off their cousins in several court cases. Eventually, Tamenos' children won the case because they possessed the correct documentation concerning the assets that were left to them by their mother.

Seeing the importance apparently attached to the protection of assets in Ptolemaic Egypt, the government had a number of systems and procedures in place to ensure the validity and safe-keeping of documentation concerning property. First of all, it both continued to support the Egyptian notarial offices and developed a network of new Greek offices across the country, where official scribes drew up and registered contracts (registration in the Greek offices also became compulsory for Egyptian Demotic contracts from c. 145 BC onward; see Chapter 12). The notarial agency and registration system ensured the validity of the contracts, which were carefully kept by all parties, who took care to retrieve every relevant document before going to trial (e.g. P.Erbstreit). Written evidence was deemed so important that, from 118 BC onward, the language of a given document determined the court before which a case was to be tried (Pestman 1985b; Méléze Modrzejewski 1975; Hauben 2016). This brings us to a second important feature of the Ptolemaic protection of assets: a court system that respected both local and Greek traditions, and that was highly accessible for all members of society. The judges were most often called in by receiving a petition, as for instance shown by P.Tor.Choach. 11. The official(s) or judge(s) would convene on a predetermined date, and both parties in the dispute would have to appear. In a vast majority of cases, the victor was the party that could produce a (preferably notarized) contract or other legal document proving their rightful ownership of the contested property. When a verdict was pronounced, it in turn had to be put into writing and deposited with the royal administration for future reference, as well as to make sure neither party later claimed false information about the case (e.g. P.Mert. II 59). The effective execution of the court verdict was overseen by local officials, but also by the court *eisagogeus* and/or *praktor*, who could force people to appear before the court and enforce verdicts.

In conclusion, investments by the Ptolemaic government in the protection of assets took the form of supporting a (no doubt costly) double, bilingual notary system, and of developing a vast network of judicial agencies, which took into account the traditions of all inhabitants and was accessible for all social classes. The costs were recovered partly by a (low) scribal fee, but as people easily appealed to the notaries or judicial authorities, this fee must have been perfectly acceptable (for the decline of Egyptian documents in Roman times, resulting in a Greek administration, see Chapter 12; for the fully developed Roman archival system, see Chapter 8).

FURTHER READING

The Dutch sociologist Veenhoven (2012) discusses cross-cultural (sub)determinants of life satisfaction and is director of the online World Database of Happiness. Ostroot and Snyder (1996) and Jordan (1993, 2010) are pilot studies applying quality-of-life concepts to the more recent past (Catholic France, Victorian England, and seventeenth-century Dublin, respectively). A paper by Wyns (2018) develops a quality-of-life index for Hellenistic Egypt, which enables the study of the impact of government on the well-being of Egypt's population.

CHAPTER THIRTY-SIX

Egypt's Specificity and Impact on Hellenistic History

Brian McGing

I'm Lagides, king, absolute master
(through my power and wealth) of sensual pleasure.
There's no Macedonian, no barbarian, equal to me
or even approaching me. The son of Selefkos
is really a joke with his cheap lechery.
But if you're looking for other things, note this too:
my city's the greatest preceptor, queen of the Greek world,
genius of all knowledge, of every art.

Cavafy, The Glory of the Ptolemies

It was difficult to ignore Hellenistic Egypt in the ancient world. Its capital, Alexandria, was the greatest city and intellectual center of the Mediterranean. The Nile was the longest river, the lighthouse and pyramids among the greatest wonders. The old woman in Herodas' first *Mime* (ll. 26–32) sums it up: “everything there is and which can be, is in Egypt: riches, palaestrae, power, happiness, glory, spectacles, philosophers, gold, young boys, temples of brother gods, an excellent King, a museum, wine, all the good things one could desire, women without number...” She does not even mention its famed fertility. Herodotus, no farmer, thought you just had to wait for the flood to recede, sow your seeds, get pigs to tread them in, and then sit back (1.14). No wonder people poured into Alexandria, as Dio Chrysostomus noted in the first century AD, from all over the world (*Orationes* 32.40).

If Egypt was a hugely attractive destination in the ancient world, it has, to some extent, proved less attractive as a scholarly subject in the modern one. Those who work on the documents and history of Greco-Roman Egypt sometimes worry that they toil away at deciphering and interpreting their texts while scholars in other areas of Classical study pay

them little or no attention. A senior and distinguished ancient historian once made the same complaint in reverse to me, and although the recent emphasis on interdisciplinarity has created exciting new currents of study, much of modern Classical scholarship remains highly fragmented, and experts in one area do not necessarily know much about any others. If Egypt is indeed isolated, that would not be particularly unusual.

The reasons for any perception of Egypt as a world apart, however, are interesting. It is very largely to do with the quantity and nature of the evidence. The sudden appearance of Greek (and other) papyri just over a century ago has created a vast and still increasing body of published documentary evidence (van Minnen 2009b, pp. 644–645). Without papyri, Egypt was perfectly manageable for Classical scholars (on the assumption that Egyptologists did the Egyptian stuff). The history of the Ptolemies was easily incorporated into the colonial analyses of the nineteenth century (Moyer 2011c, pp. 11–25), as the historical sources were the familiar ones: historians and other writers of Greek and Latin “literature,” inscriptions, coins, and some material remains. And it is still possible to write largely traditional political histories of the Ptolemaic kingdom (Hölbl 2001), or indeed of the Hellenistic world (Errington 2008), without being swamped by papyri – most of which do not bear on matters political. But even Egyptian experts can find the amount of papyrological material difficult to manage: as van Minnen comments, “For Egypt, the number of available texts on any topic is just about overwhelming. Elsewhere one is at best dealing with useful snapshots” (van Minnen 2009b, p. 656). In other words, even when there is relevant comparative material from Egypt, many ancient historians will find, first, that it is vast; second, that it has not necessarily been explained by papyrologists or historians of Egypt; and third, that their own evidence is so limited that it is scarcely meaningful to draw comparisons with the Egyptian data.

The problem is well illustrated in a recent study of the Seleucid economy, in which the author, while examining the role of Seleucid financial administrators – among which are figures like the *dioiketes* and *oikonomos*, well documented in Ptolemaic Egypt – makes the following observation (Aperghis 2004, p. 269, n.23):

It is not possible in this book to present details of the Ptolemaic financial administration and compare them with what will be derived from the Seleukid Empire. There is too much that is unclear, and a comprehensive study is certainly required by someone more knowledgeable in this area than myself ... At the level of a village, the Tebtunis papyri give an interesting picture of the workings of the Ptolemaic economy, but there is no Seleukid source detailed enough so as to be able to draw comparisons.

One might challenge such a quick dismissal of the Ptolemaic evidence, but it is understandable. There is a model study of the *dioiketes* in the Roman Period (Hagedorn 1985), but that is no help for the Ptolemaic officer, and it would be difficult to find the scattered expert papyrological coverage of the Ptolemaic *oikonomos*. Relevant scholarship can sometimes be well hidden to outsiders: if there was a Seleucid financial *epimeletes*, we might excuse a Seleucid scholar for missing the detailed consideration of the Ptolemaic *epimeletes* in the appendix to an article entitled “Illegal Salt in the Lycopolite Nome” (McGing 2002a).

If, in the past, the sheer bulk of documentation aroused any guilt over one’s ignoring it, two sources of reassurance presented themselves. First, the papyri dealt almost entirely

with minor, everyday matters, and were therefore quite unimportant; editing texts containing works of ancient literature was respectable scholarship, but not documentary papyri, which had nothing valuable to tell us (van Minnen 1993, p. 9). Literary scholars, of course, plow their own fields, but surely all but the most elitist would now accept the validity of social and economic history as a scholarly endeavor, and the importance of the papyri to it. The bias survives, however, and surfaces in strange places. In an article in the school magazine of Reed College (Portland, Oregon), the author writes about May Barnard, an alumna of the school, who published a much-admired translation of Sappho in 1958 (Donahue 2009). On the discovery of papyrus cartonnage, he has this to say:

Most of the long-buried papyri were dross – IOUs, invitations, tax returns, laundry lists. But Oxford grads Bernard Grenfell and Arthur Hunt kept probing through a nearby ancient garbage dump. They gathered scraps as small as postage stamps in reed baskets and brought them to England. By 1915, they'd reassembled texts from Euclid, Pindar, and Euripides, along with 56 undiscovered fragments of Sappho.

It is comforting to know that Grenfell and Hunt did not waste all their time on “dross,” and at least achieved *something* useful by reassembling literary texts.

An apparently more respectable source of reassurance was the idea that what the papyri revealed showed Egypt to be so different from everywhere else that the country was not relevant to scholars interested in other areas of the Hellenistic and Roman worlds: it was completely unlike any other Hellenistic kingdom or Roman province. This assumption is now seen to be untenable, if only because of the discovery of papyri from outside Egypt, which show striking similarities of subject, content, style, and even handwriting (Bagnall 1995, pp. 60–68, 2005, pp. 187–190). Of course, there are particularities that apply only to Egypt (Clarysse and Thompson 2006, 2, pp. 342–343). It may be true, for example, that the Nile created agricultural conditions that led to a particularly intense economic exploitation by the Ptolemies, but it is not safe to conclude that the taxation system, for example, must therefore have been completely different from everywhere else. It was always inherently improbable that in spite of shared Macedonian and Achaemenid backgrounds, the Ptolemies would have devised a way of running their kingdom that was totally unlike anything the Seleucids or Antigonids did. Recognizing differences is important and revealing, but it is no longer a viable escape route to ignore Egypt solely on the basis of its supposed specificity.

It might also be worth mentioning Momigliano's idiosyncratic exclusion of Hellenistic Egypt from his well-known book, *Alien Wisdom*, in which he examines the encounter of Hellenic culture with the Romans, Jews, Celts, and Persians (Momigliano 1975). He omits Egypt on the dubious grounds, first, that the Greek reception of Egypt was no different in the Hellenistic Period from what it had been in the Classical era, and so there was no need to say anything more (the Greeks having failed to move beyond exoticizing it in Herodotean manner), and, second, that Ptolemaic rule subordinated and marginalized Egyptian culture, with which it could hardly communicate anyway. The poverty of such a view has been well exposed by Moyer (2011c) in his fine study, *Egypt and the Limits of Hellenism*.

Before examining briefly just a few aspects of Ptolemaic history that intersect with the wider world of the Hellenistic Period, it might be well to emphasize that I am primarily

concerned with modern scholarship, rather than ancient realities – with the impact, real and potential, of the study of Ptolemaic history on the study of Hellenistic history, rather than the impact of Ptolemaic Egypt on the Mediterranean world of its time.

The economy and its social ramifications may be a good place to start, as Finley's well-known hostility to papyrological evidence and exclusion of Greco-Roman Egypt from his economic analysis of the ancient world has provided powerful support for those minded to sideline Egypt (Manning 2005, pp. 164–165; Bagnall 2005, pp. 187–190). He has always, however, been up against tough opposition, in the figures of Rostovtzeff (1922, 1941) and Préaux (1939, 1978), both of whom dealt with Hellenistic Egypt in specific studies and in larger works on the Hellenistic world more generally. Rostovtzeff's picture of a strong, centralized Ptolemaic economy may no longer be seen as justified, nor his treatment of the Fayum as representative of Egypt as a whole – with an increase in the amount of documentation, and particularly in the use of Demotic evidence, since his time, regional variation within Egypt has become much clearer (Manning 2003a) – but the appearance of Egypt and its papyrological evidence in one of the great works of twentieth-century scholarship, *The Social and Economic History of the Hellenistic World*, has more or less guaranteed it a place at the table of ancient economic history, and general studies of Hellenistic history are unlikely to omit coverage of the Ptolemaic economy (Shipley 2000, pp. 224–229).

How any overarching narrative of the economy of the ancient Mediterranean world may be configured is very much a hot topic of debate at the moment (Manning and Morris 2005, pp. 8–25). And how Ptolemaic Egypt might fit into such a narrative is also uncertain. There are winds of change blowing through economic history, bringing exciting new ideas and scholarly alignments involving all parts of the Hellenistic world (e.g. Archibald et al. 2011). The Hellenistic states receive due attention in *The Cambridge Economic History of the Ancient World* (Scheidel et al. 2007, pp. 409–483), but with the Hellenistic Near East, Hellenistic Egypt, and Hellenistic Greece and western Asia Minor providing separate chapters. The relevance of Egypt seems to be widely accepted, but the basic question about its specificity remains: how useful is the more detailed economic evidence from Egypt in helping to suggest lines of interpretation in other areas?

Even a cursory reading of the chapters on the Seleucid and Ptolemaic economies in the *Cambridge Economic History* reveals the sorts of similarities between Babylonia and Egypt in the Hellenistic Period that should make close comparison a valuable exercise. “Babylonia was an agricultural paradise” with agricultural yields similar to or even higher than those of Egypt (Van Der Spek 2007, p. 412; Manning 2007, p. 438, n.9). Both had large canal systems, extended and carefully maintained; land was drained and reclaimed; new crops were introduced. Temples were one of the main drivers of the economy: the kings made donations to them and allowed them to collect their own dues. Military colonies, Greek immigration, and the foundation of new cities are also points of similarity. Seleucid and Ptolemaic kings may have inherited localized and different ways of exploiting the natural resources of their kingdoms, but when you have, for example, something called a salt tax in both jurisdictions (Clarysse and Thompson 2006, 2, pp. 36–70; Aperghis 2004, pp. 154–156), it must make good sense to use the far more extensive documentation from Egypt to pose questions of the Seleucid evidence.

The same applies to other taxes and many other areas of economic and social activity. Clarysse and Thompson (2006, 2, pp. 343–348) have made a powerful case for the

usefulness of the Ptolemaic data, and have provided two volumes of foundational importance for comparative purposes by presenting both the raw evidence of the texts (vol. 1) and a detailed historical analysis of their significance (vol. 2). Their study of what may appear to be dry and difficult administrative lists illuminates large swathes of life in Ptolemaic Egypt: the position of the military and other Greek settlers and of the Egyptian population, the occupational structure of the population, household structures, the role of women, population size and density, the organization of the census, tax registration and tax collection, and the rate of taxation: these are all topics of central interest for the history of the Hellenistic kingdoms and, indeed, of the Roman Empire.

There has been a great deal of discussion, for instance, on Egypt's population size and density, albeit primarily in the Roman Period (e.g. Scheidel 2001, pp. 181–250; Rathbone 2007a, pp. 699–700). There is much disagreement about detail, but it is clear that the papyrological evidence from Egypt offers a precision lacking in most other regions, and that this precision can offer a useful starting point for estimating the population figures of other regions. Galilee, for example, was an area of great fertility and high population centered around villages (Josephus, *Vita* 235; *Bellum Judaicum* 3.587–588). It seems to me that the Egyptian Fayum offers a usefully comparable environment (McGing 2002b, pp. 102–104). While Rathbone (1990, pp. 108–109; 130–134) made a good case for his estimate of 120 per square kilometer for the density of population on the land in Egypt during the second century AD, Clarysse and Thompson's (2006, 2, p. 101) analysis of the much better data for the Ptolemaic Period Fayum (60 per square kilometer) sounds a warning for those minded to propose much higher figures. I have already suggested that Seleucid Babylonia bears many similarities to Ptolemaic Egypt, and, in light of the Fayum figures, Aperghis' (2004, p. 14) estimation of population density in Babylonia at 200 per square kilometer seems very high.

Of course, there are major silences in the evidence for the social and economic history of the Antigonids, Seleucids, and minor monarchies of Asia Minor. As Aperghis noted, the Tebtynis papyri provide massive detail of life on the land in the Ptolemaic Fayum – fully exploited by Thompson in her study of the village of Kerkeosiris (Crawford 1971). There is no evidence quite like this for the Seleucid Empire, but the picture she draws at least provides parameters of the possible for any study of ancient village life; the same is true at city level, with her careful analysis of Memphis (Thompson 2012). The data from Egypt cannot be used to provide the evidence that is lacking in other places, but it can – and should – be used to ask questions of the evidence that does exist, scattered and uneven as it may be.

Hellenistic kings, like all other monarchs, had courts. Although for a long time courts of the ancient world received remarkably little treatment, given the importance of sole rulers, this situation is changing. The groundbreaking work of N. Elias on the court of Louis XIV and his successors has penetrated other areas of scholarship, and conceptual rigor has brought considerable advance in the study of the subject (Spawforth 2007, pp. 1–16). Of all the courts of the Hellenistic world, papyri give us by far the most detailed picture of the workings of the Ptolemaic one, particularly in relation to rank and the use of titles for courtiers (“friends,” “relations,” and so on). The extensive material has been organized prosopographically and analyzed in two important works by Mooren (1975, 1977), which set out very clearly the details of how the whole Egyptian system worked.

It is true that Hellenistic courts can be studied purely through what Polybius tells us – as Herman has done in an excellent article (1997) – but it may smack slightly of papyrus-avoidance to state, as Herman does, that “the picture of the Ptolemaic administration offered by the papyri is, of course, far more refined and sophisticated than that which emerges from Polybius’ *Histories*” without actually saying something of that more refined and sophisticated papyrological picture (Herman 1997, p. 214, n.37).

My point is simply to emphasize that all Hellenistic courts used titles, as did other courts of the ancient world (see e.g. Brosius 2007 on the Achaemenids). How they used them (whether in honorific or functional mode) and how they developed is not always clear, and may well have varied from place to place. But by far the best documented of the Hellenistic courts – that of the Ptolemies – has sufficient quantity and quality of evidence to create a model against which to set the more scattered evidence from elsewhere. And to be sure, Mooren’s studies are widely cited. They are certainly incorporated fully into the considerations of Savalli-Lestrade throughout her important work on the “friends” of Hellenistic Asia (Savalli-Lestrade 1998). She summarizes Mooren’s main findings for the Ptolemies, but only accepts as applicable to other courts the distinction he establishes between real and honorific court titulature; only classes of title can be demonstrated elsewhere, not a hierarchy of titles linked to administrative functions as in Egypt (Savalli-Lestrade 1998, pp. 252–253). That may be the case, but there are sufficient similarities in all areas of the Hellenistic world at least to start with the Ptolemaic system as a working hypothesis. Mooren’s work is perhaps susceptible to the charge, as Savalli-Lestrade points out, that he only touched on the evolution of the aulic titulature in other Hellenistic monarchies. It is clear by now that no one court can be studied in isolation from the others. The importance of comparison can be seen well in Weber (1997), which takes account of the Ptolemaic data. It is possible that other kings organized their courts somewhat differently, but given the close relations between the Hellenistic monarchies and the same and similar titles used everywhere, it seems highly unlikely that they did things in a radically different manner from the Ptolemies.

The study of Hellenistic Judaism, and in particular its relationship with the Greek culture it encountered, has been a topic of intense interest since the groundbreaking work of M. Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism* (1974). Hengel concentrated on the encounter in Palestine, but the influence of his work spread into all areas where Jews interacted with Greek culture, Egypt being no exception. Of course, literary evidence such as the *Letter of Aristeas* or *III Maccabees* remains crucial in assessing how the Jews depicted their relationship with the Ptolemaic kings (Gruen 1998, pp. 202–245), and Josephus and Philo have important things to say about the status, rights, and structures of Jewish communities in Egypt (Kasher 1985). But evidence that papyri do not need to prove a barrier to those with interests other than Egypt is provided by the many scholars of ancient Judaism who have shown no obvious reluctance to engage with papyrus texts. This is perhaps not surprising given the central importance of Egypt in the Moses story and in the translation of the Hebrew Bible into Greek, or in view of the Jewish diaspora elsewhere in the Mediterranean and Near Eastern world: it is not really possible to offer any overall analysis of ancient Judaism without being prepared to examine it in its dispersed locations (Schürer 1986, pp. 1–176; Barclay 1996; Williams 1998). Accessibility to the Egyptian evidence has been greatly facilitated by important collections of material, both for the Jewish

military settlement at Elephantine in the fifth century BC (Porten 1968; Porten et al. 1996) and for the whole of the Greco-Roman Period (see the three-volume collection of papyri related to Jews and Judaism, the *Corpus Papyrorum Judaicarum*, C.Pap.Jud.; Tcherikover et al. 1957–1964).

Clearly, papyri have an important contribution to make to the study of Judaism. The story of the Jews in Egypt from pharaonic times to the emperor Hadrian has been outlined in an attractive narrative by Mëlèze Modrzejewski (1997a), but it is the detail of papyrus evidence that offers something special. The most spectacular addition in recent times has been that of the texts published by J. Cowey and Kl. Maresch concerning the Jewish *politeuma* in Herakleopolis in the second century BC (P.Polit.Iud.). This solved the dispute over whether or not the Jews had a *politeuma*, but much more importantly it provides a fascinating view of the operation of that institution and what it has to say about the everyday lives and relationships of the Jewish community. The details will take time to percolate into wider studies. Manning (2011) has highlighted the potential of using social-network theory for Hellenistic Egypt, and it is hard to imagine that this would not be a good line of investigation in the case of the Jews of Herakleopolis and its environs.

Limitations of space prevent me from discussing many other well-documented aspects of life in Ptolemaic Egypt that could usefully be taken into account in wider contexts than Egypt (religion and law, for instance). I want to end with some consideration of the question whether scholars of Egypt in the Greco-Roman Period are themselves responsible for contributing to its isolation by the type of work they do or the way they present it.

By far the greatest amount of work is devoted to editing texts, rather than to historical analysis (Bagnall 1995, pp. 1–2). This is understandable: there are still tens of thousands of unedited papyri, and the task of turning these raw archeological data into usable historical evidence may be challenging in terms of the training needed, but it is also highly enjoyable, exciting, and satisfying. On the whole, there is nothing very forbidding for a non-papyrological ancient historian about a particular document, as the norm is to provide an introduction, text, translation, and commentary. The problem is in their number and, often, their relation to one another, since many papyrus editions reflect what happens to have ended up, via a variety of paths, in a museum or university collection, rather than representing a coherent body of related documents (Bagnall 1995, pp. 26–29). A more or less self-contained and fully explained collection of texts (such as Clarysse and Thompson 2006) is relatively rare.

This lack of easily accessible analysis or synthesis has undoubtedly contributed to the perceived difficulty of studying Egypt. But the situation is changing. When Bowman published his attractive *Egypt after the Pharaohs* (1986), it was a very important point of access to the story of Greco-Roman Egypt, as there were astonishingly few general works at the time. In the classical world of publishing, general histories, handbooks, and companions are now appearing in squadrons, leading at times to wasteful repetition, long after the law of diminishing returns has come into play. On the whole, Egypt, given the rather forbidding appearance of its papyrological evidence, needs all the attention it can get. Works like Depauw's *Companion to Demotic Studies* (1997), the *Oxford Handbook of Papyrology* (Bagnall 2009b), and Bagnall and Rathbone's guide to the archeology and history of Egypt (2004) are vital works of outreach to the wider scholarly world (as well as being useful for Egyptian experts); they, and general histories (such as Shaw 2000; Lloyd 2010;

Van de Mieroop 2011), have undoubtedly helped to de-mystify Egypt and bring it more into the mainstream of “ancient history.” But, at the risk of appearing to bite the hand that feeds me, will we know when to call a halt to handbooks? There is certainly repetition in some of the histories I have just referred to, and, more important, by its very nature this type of work cannot be expected to provide the sort of detail required by scholars in other areas writing specialist studies. Perhaps it is time for a joint scholarly project to produce a lexicon or encyclopedia of Hellenistic Egypt (or Greco-Roman Egypt), with entries along the lines of Pauly–Wissowa (see already the online *Encyclopedia of Ancient History*).

Hellenistic history has flourished in the last generation, and Ptolemaic Egypt, in spite of the problems of scale posed by the quantity of its papyri, is well set to take its place in the wider story of the Mediterranean and Near East.

FURTHER READING

On the challenges posed by papyrus evidence and its relationship with the writing of history, Bagnall (1995) is crucial; the starting place for the papyrologically uninitiated is now Bagnall (2009b). Bowman (1986) remains the best introduction to the history of Greco-Roman Egypt, and Shipley (2000) to Hellenistic history in general. Moyer (2011c) fills a conspicuous gap in adding Egypt to the study of how Greek culture interacted with that of others. Clarysse and Thompson (2006) is a specialist work, but an important demonstration of the potential of papyrus evidence in illuminating social and economic history, and in providing comparative data for areas other than Egypt. The best short description of the economy of Hellenistic Egypt is Manning (2007), and his other works cited in this chapter point to the exciting role Hellenistic Egypt has – and will continue to have – in the study of the ancient economy. The structure and role of Hellenistic courts is steadily receiving more attention: Savalli-Lestrade (1998) is a helpful collection of material and an accessible analysis of some of the main issues. The third volume of the revised Schürer (1986) sets out the basic data about the Jews of Egypt, which is written into a narrative in Méléze Modrzejewski (1997a). The papyri of the *politeuma* of the Jews in second-century BC Herakleopolis are still only available in the original German edition of Cowey and Maresch (P.Polit.Iud.), but constitute a vital addition to our knowledge of Judaism in Hellenistic Egypt.

CHAPTER THIRTY-SEVEN

Egypt's Specificity and Impact on Roman History

Michael A. Speidel

Thousands of years before Rome took over control of Egypt, the expanding Sahara Desert drove the early ancestors of the ancient Egyptians to live in the narrow yet fertile Nile Valley. Here, they eventually adopted a more sedentary lifestyle and developed a most remarkable civilization, with various unique and striking features and achievements, including the organization and administration of mass-labor construction projects (not infrequently on a breathtaking scale), the intensive use of writing in various spheres of economy, religion, and government, a complex concept of the right and harmonious order of things, and the depiction of zoomorphic deities and gods with animal heads. Existence in the Nile Valley was governed by the yearly inundations of the river and structured by the static necessities of the recurring and symmetrical agricultural cycle, which prompted Hecataeus, Herodotus, and others to speak of a “gift” of the River Nile (Griffiths 1966, p. 57 on Herodotus 2.5; Arrian, *Anabasis* 5.6.5; Strabo 1.2.29, 15.1.16). It is perhaps not surprising, therefore, that it was the Egyptian calendar of 365 days that served as the basis for the new Roman calendar that Julius Caesar introduced in Rome in 45 BC, on the advice of the Alexandrian astronomer Sosigenes, and to which Augustus added final adjustments (Pliny, *Naturalis Historia* 18.57.211; see Parker 1971; Hagedorn 1994; Hagedorn and Worp 1994; Jones 2000; Bennett 2003, 2004). Within Egypt, however, the traditional calendar remained in use.

At any rate, many of Roman Egypt's most striking institutional, architectural, cultural, and religious phenomena were a product of the country's long history and continued to characterize it for centuries after the last Hellenistic ruler, Cleopatra VII, surrendered her kingdom to Emperor Caesar in 30 BC. Other peculiarities, however, mainly concerning parts of the new province's government and its relation to the rest of the empire, were introduced by the Romans after their takeover of the Nile Valley. A question of particular

importance therefore, and one that has led to a long and intensive scholarly debate, concerns the extent to which continuity or change characterized the transition of the Nile Valley from Ptolemaic to Roman rule, and the degree to which Roman Egypt differed from all other Roman provinces (for recent well-balanced discussions, see e.g. Haensch (2008a, 2008b); Jördens 2009, pp. 24–58).

On August 1, 30 BC, Emperor Caesar triumphantly entered Alexandria. His victory over the Queen of Egypt and her Roman ally was soon celebrated throughout the empire as the beginning of a new era of peace; thus, various Roman calendars celebrated August 1 as the day on which “Imperator Caesar freed the State from the gravest danger,” (*Imp(erator) Caesar, Divi f(ilius), rem public(am) tristissimo periculo liberavit*, e.g. Inscr. It. XIII 2.2 and 25; cf. Ehrenberg et al. 1976, no. 49). At any rate, the date marked the beginning of the victor’s sole rule over the Roman Empire and the start of a new regime known as the “Principate.” To be sure, the agrarian lifestyle of the vast majority of Egypt’s population was hardly touched by the transition from royal Ptolemaic to imperial Roman rule, and continued to exert great influence on the social, cultural, and administrative organization of the province (cf. Ritner 1998, pp. 2–4; Rowlandson 2010, pp. 237–238; Huebner 2017). A particularly striking insight into how contemporary Egyptians experienced this transition comes from a famous sworn declaration on papyrus of four lamplighters to the overseers of the temples of the Oxyrhynchite and Koptite nomes that they will supply oil for the temple lamps for the current first year of Caesar “in accordance with what was supplied up to the 22nd which was also the 7th year” (i.e. of Cleopatra) (P.Oxy. XII 1453 = Sel.Pap. II 327). In a very sober and businesslike tone, the text thus illustrates how life at this level of society went on in 30/29 BC without much upheaval after one monarch, called “Caesar, god and son of a god,” simply replaced another, Cleopatra, the last of the Ptolemies (Millar 2002, p. 294).

Historians have long ranked the Roman takeover of Ptolemaic Egypt both as a major and far-reaching event in contemporary geopolitical power relations and as a pivotal moment in Egyptian and Roman history and culture. At the same time, however, as a Roman province, they also considered the former Ptolemaic kingdom to have fundamentally differed from all other Roman provinces. Theodor Mommsen even declared that it was never a Roman province in the true sense of the word before the end of the third century AD. In his view, Emperor Caesar confiscated the Ptolemaic kingdom and transferred it into a kind of personal possession or private estate (Mommsen 1887, pp. 749, 859, 952–956). (Later however, Mommsen changed his mind and counted the country among the imperial provinces; Mommsen 1886, pp. 233–234, n. 3. The enormous influence of his *Staatsrecht* is no doubt the main reason for the prevalence of his earlier opinion.) With the Roman ruler thought to have taken on the role of an Egyptian pharaoh, the many scholars who adopted Mommsen’s view even called Egypt’s equestrian governor a “viceroy” (apparently alluding to the governor-general of British India) and thought of Egypt as a sort of crown domain (for these developments, see Geraci 1989; Jördens 2009, pp. 24–58).

Support for thinking of Egypt’s position as unique within the fabrics of the Roman Empire and as more closely tied to the emperors than any other part of the *imperium Romanum* seems to be ample and readily available in our literary, epigraphic, and archeological sources: traditional depictions of Roman emperors as pharaoh on the walls of

Egyptian temples, the continued existence of many of the Ptolemaic administrative institutions in Roman times, the ban on Roman senators and leading equestrians to enter the country without express permission of the emperor, the well-attested introduction after the takeover of a new era called “the rule of Caesar, son of a god,” the custom of dating by the emperor’s regnal years (rather than by the names of the eponymous Roman consuls), the closed monetary system within the province, and the near complete absence of municipal structures throughout the country all seem to betray the true sense of such sketchy remarks by Strabo, Flaccus, and Tacitus that Augustus had set the Nile Valley aside in order to keep it under direct imperial control, that it was in the “possession” of the emperors, and that the Roman governors ruled Egypt like kings (Strabo 17.1.12; Philo, *In Flaccum* 19.158; Tacitus, *Annales* 2.59.3, *Historiae* 1.11.1; cf. Geraci 1989, pp. 58–88; Jördens 2009, pp. 24–61). No comparable statements are known from other imperial provinces. According to this view, continuity was predominant, and contributed significantly to a unique status of Egypt within the Roman Empire (Law 1978, p. 194: “Roman rule did not involve any considerable degree of ‘Romanization’ for Egypt”).

Taking this position, of course, meant that, methodologically, it was practically impossible to make use of Egypt’s rich documentary evidence for attempts to reconstruct practice in other parts of the empire. Some scholars still adhere to this opinion, or have done until very recently (“private domain”: Davies 2004, p. 60; Rocca 2008, p. 211; de Blois and van der Spek 2008, p. 210; “personal possession”: Kleiner 2005, p. 208; Bringmann 2007, p. 103; Cooley 2009, p. 229; cf. also Clauss 2003, p. 238: “kaiserliches Krongut” and “Privatanwesen des Kaisers”: Kienast 2009, p. 378; “Kronland des Prinzeps”: Dunstan 2011, p. 240). However, an altogether different view – which also had its early advocates (e.g. Mitteis 1908, pp. 350–352; Wilcken 1912, pp. 30–31; Stein 1915, p. 98; Gelzer 1963, pp. 368–370) – has now won the upper hand, for there is a broad and growing consensus among scholars that Emperor Caesar, in 30 BC, reduced Egypt, despite its many peculiarities, to a regular province, even “a Roman *provincia* like any other” (Kruse 2013b, p. 95; Jördens 2012a: “there can be no notion that the former Ptolemaic kingdom had any special standing within the Roman Empire as compared to other provinces”). That, of course, amounts in principle to what Augustus claimed he had done: “I added Egypt to the power of the Roman People” (RGDA 27: *Aegyptum imperio populi Romani adieci*; cf. CIL VI 702 = ILS 91b: *Aegyptio in potestatem populi Romani redacta*, from the base of the obelisk used for Augustus’ sundial in Rome). Strabo (17.1.12) concurs, stating that Egypt was turned into a “province” (*eparcheia*), and Velleius (2.39.2) even specifies that the Egyptian revenues went to the “Roman People’s treasury” (*aerarium populi Romani*), as we would expect to be the case with ordinary Roman provinces. The weight of this testimony is increased by the fact that both of these authors were writing close to the events, and by the existence in Roman Egypt of well-known institutions of Roman provincial administration (such as the *conventus*) and of garrisons of the Roman army.

In particular, a very influential paper by the famous American papyrologist Naphtali Lewis emphasizing the “romanity of Roman Egypt” (as he put it in another article) has dramatically shifted scholarly consensus on this question (Lewis 1970; see also Lewis 1984). It is now generally held that the transition from Ptolemaic to Roman rule entailed a fundamental rupture in the country’s history, and that Egypt, in many important aspects, turned “Roman” in a process that began in 30 BC and reached its culmination around the

turn of the third to the fourth century, during the reign of Diocletian (e.g. Geraci 1983; Bowman and Rathbone 1992; Rathbone 1993; Sharp 1999a; Capponi 2005, p. 60; Ando 2006, p. 178; Bowman 2007b; Capponi 2010a, p. 183; Rowlandson 2010, p. 238; Kruse 2013b, p. 95). Interestingly, the great many documents on papyrus that survive from Egypt and nearly nowhere else in the Roman Empire have been identified as a main cause for the supposed earlier misinterpretations of the status of Roman Egypt. For, this unique and immensely rich body of evidence is said to have previously been wrongly taken to reflect an administrative and legal practice peculiar to Egypt (Capponi 2010a, p. 183; Ando 2006, p. 178; Kruse 2013b, p. 95). The current revised position is based first on studies analyzing the documentary papyri from Egypt and second on finds of ancient Greek and Latin documents from outside Egypt, many of them from recent decades, as well as on the few surviving copies of such documents in inscriptions of stone and bronze (e.g. Haensch 1992, 1997, 2008a; Cotton et al. 1995; Feissel and Gascoü 1995). The results of such studies reveal remarkable common traits between legal and administrative practices in Egypt and other provinces, and therefore are generally taken as proof for the “normality” of Egypt as a Roman province.

The degree to which the Roman takeover of the Nile Valley entailed continuity or change is evidently an important factor when attempting to define the specificity of Egypt as a Roman province. On the whole, it appears that “the changes introduced by the Romans were at least as important as the continuities” (Bowman 1996, p. 682). Both contributed significantly to the specificity of the Roman province of Egypt. Thus, phenomena of continuity can even be observed in the country’s new provincial government, although this entire sphere, from a Roman perspective, was evidently expected to fully and reliably serve Roman interests. For instance, the pre-Ptolemaic basic administrative division of the Nile Valley into nomes was left intact by the Roman conquerors (cf. Haring 2010). The two leading officials at this administrative level in the Ptolemaic period, the *strategos* and the royal scribe, continued to exist and to perform most of their former administrative tasks in the nome’s capitals (*metropoleis*) under Roman rule. Moreover, the Romans continued to recruit these officials from the indigenous Greek-speaking elite, although they now (apparently as a rule) had to serve outside their home nomes for their terms of office, and the *strategos* lost his military authority (Derda 2006, pp. 149–150). The Romans also took over from the Ptolemaic administration many other offices in Alexandria and the Nile Valley, such as the toparch, the *bibliophylakes*, the *eklogistai*, the *eisagogeis*, and the *epistatai*, and continued to recruit the relevant officials from the local elites of Greco-Egyptian background (Derda 2008; Haensch 2008b, pp. 86–90; see also Chapters 4 and 8). Also, there are significant continuities between the local capitation taxes of the Late Ptolemaic Period and the Roman poll tax (Monson 2014b, pp. 127–160; see also Chapter 10). Whereas Rome’s taking over and making use of traditional institutions in administrative respects was anything but unknown, the continued existence of many Ptolemaic offices in the administrative system of Roman Egypt evidently contributed to the specific character of the Nile Valley province (e.g. for the continued existence of Hellenistic *strategiai* in the Roman provinces of Thrace and Cappadocia, see Speidel 2009, p. 588). Moreover, it seems that this particular aspect of Roman Egypt’s provincial government entailed further consequences, as certain types of document kept their traditional forms and Greek language to an extent that is unknown

from other Roman provinces (Haensch 2008a). In other cases, it is more difficult to determine whether the rich (if chronologically and geographically unevenly distributed) papyrological evidence reveals phenomena typical of Roman Egypt or whether it simply allows a more detailed view of realities that also existed in other provinces of the Roman Empire but which cannot be observed there because of the lack of surviving papyri (Haensch 1997, 2008b).

The replacement of the Ptolemaic royal government by Roman magistrates at the top echelons of the new province's administration also contributed to the extraordinary character of *provincia Aegyptus*. For, Emperor Caesar decided to permanently install an equestrian prefect at the head of the government instead of a senator, as was found in every other province (Tacitus, *Historiae* 1.11.1; cf. also Arrian, *Anabasis* 3.5.7; Cassius Dio 51.17.1–3). In order to convert this arrangement into a permanent institution, Augustus even had the people of Rome approve a law (*lex*) that gave the equestrian *praefectus Aegypti* the same powers as a senatorial *proconsul* (*imperium ... ad similitudinem proconsulis*) so that he could legally command the legions and fulfill his function as a fully fledged provincial governor (Tacitus, *Annales* 12.60.1; Cassius Dio 53.13.2; Digesta 1.17.1 (Ulpian, *Ad edictum* 15): *praefectus Aegypti non prius deponit praefecturam et imperium, quod ad similitudinem proconsulis lege sub Augusto ei datum est*). In other words, the office of the late republican governor served as a model for the head of Egypt's new Roman administration, based on the legal authority conveyed by the people's assembly and the political will of the new sole ruler (Eck 2016, pp. 101–102).

The appointment by the Roman ruler of a *iuridicus* (*dikaiodotes*) as the second most important position in the new government's organization and as a high-ranking “assistant” to the governor in matters of jurisdiction, on the other hand, was not as extraordinary as it may seem (cf. Haensch 2008b, p. 85; *pace* Capponi 2005, p. 32). For, only a few years later, Augustus also appointed a (senatorial) *iuridicus* to assist the (senatorial) governor of *Hispania Citerior*. In both cases, this was no doubt mainly due to the enormous size of the two provinces. As a direct consequence of appointing an equestrian governor, it was impossible for Roman senators to serve in subordinate positions within the government of Roman Egypt, as they could not be expected to take orders from mere equestrians. Thus, all other top officials, including the *iuridicus*, the procurators, the *epistrategoi*, and even the commanders and tribunes of Rome's legions in Egypt were of equestrian rank.

The equestrian rank of the governor and the local, Greek-speaking environment (but not Ptolemaic traditions) in which the Roman army was embedded also led to the establishment and unusual designation of certain military functions, and specifically local religious practice became traditional routine in certain units (Haensch 2010, 2012). However, on the whole, such cases were exceptional, and as far as the structure, the operation, and the daily administrative practice and official record-keeping of the Roman troops in Egypt is concerned, the *exercitus Aegyptiacus* seems to have differed little from other Roman provincial armies (Speidel 2009, pp. 283–304).

There can be no doubt, therefore, that the Roman conquest of Egypt led to the transformation of the country into a true *provincia* of the Roman Empire. It shared many traits with other provinces, and the principles that guided the new Roman government of the *praefectus Aegypti* were practically the same as those of other provincial governments (Jördens 2009, pp. 515–523). Nevertheless, as a province, Egypt was also different in many

ways – even peculiar in some respects – due both to particular spheres of continuity and to the Roman implementation of unusual measures. Its uniqueness persisted for centuries, as its provincial organization never served as a model for other Roman provinces. Equestrian prefects of provincial territories are indeed known from other parts of the empire (e.g. Judea, Commagene), but they were subordinate to full provincial governors (Speidel 2009, pp. 576 and 638–639). From the reign of Claudius, equestrians also independently governed a number of provinces, but their title (*procurator*) and rank, as well as the administrative and military structures of their provinces, differed radically from what characterized Roman Egypt. Even Septimius Severus’ establishment of an equestrian government for his newly created *provincia Mesopotamia* in AD 195 was modeled not on Roman Egypt, but on the usual organization of imperial provinces (Speidel 2009, pp. 184–191). Of course, many other provinces (particularly in the East) also had specific traits rooted in developments of their local past that characterized their governmental, social, religious, and cultural traditions. Moreover, the eastern provinces all shared the experience of Hellenistic rule, and their administrative structures may therefore have had more features in common than can be identified with the sources currently available. Yet, to claim that Egypt was not an atypical province simply because “there was no typical province” is to ignore its many blatantly unique traits (Capponi 2010a, p. 183).

Despite the strangeness that characterized the Egyptians in the eyes of the Greeks, Herodotus (2.35), for one, was thoroughly impressed by the age of the Egyptian culture, noting that “it has the most wonders, and everywhere presents works beyond description.” Yet, Greek opinion on Egypt was anything but undivided, if we are to trust the few pertinent scraps that have survived from the works of Greek authors. Some, including Plato in his *Timaeus*, published utopian views of the Nile Valley culture, while others, such as Polybius, were less impressed, and described latter-day Egyptians as greedy, cruel, angry, or sluggish (Gruen 2011, pp. 76–114). What is known of Roman perceptions differs little: many admired the Egyptian culture, particularly for its age, achievements, and assumed wisdom, but others thought of contemporary Egyptians and Alexandrians as excitable, quarrelsome, and even downright seditious (cf. Juvenal, *Satire* 15; Ammianus Marcellinus 22.16.23; *Historia Augusta* Q 8.1–2; on the subject in general, see Gruen 2011; Bryn 2013). Evidently, during Emperor Caesar’s campaign against Marc Antony and Cleopatra, Egyptians and their culture had an exceptionally bad press in Rome, but it seems that the victor of Actium particularly feared the alleged rebellious nature of the Egyptians. For, according to Tacitus, fear of rebellions stood behind his decision to entrust the government of the new province to an equestrian, as the fanaticism and superstition of its inhabitants could easily lead to civil strife and sudden disturbances (Tacitus, *Historiae* 1.11). Philo of Alexandria, writing just a few decades after the Roman conquest and the ensuing revolt in the Thebaid of 30/29 BC, thought of the Egyptians as “constantly being in the habit of exciting great seditions from very small sparks” because of their natural insubordination “at every trivial or common occurrence” (Philo, *In Flaccum* 4.17; for a very similar notion at a much later date, see Ammianus Marcellinus 22.16.23). Tacitus also explained that Augustus banned Roman senators and knights of higher rank from entering Egypt without his permission because he feared the possibility of a rival exciting the unruly population and seizing the country, distressing Italy by famine, and thereby threatening his rule (Tacitus, *Annales* 2.59; cf. Cassius Dio 51.17.1). Cassius Dio

(51.17.2) concurs, and adds that Augustus denied the Alexandrians the reinstitution of a town council for the same reasons (cf. Josephus, *Bellum Judaicum* 2.16.4). He even claims that Augustus did not allow Egyptians to become senators in Rome.

Such statements are of course just as anachronistic as Tacitus' and Dio's references to Egypt's anticipated role as a major supplier of grain for the city of Rome, the army, and other regions in the East. Egypt's importance in these respects was only to become fully apparent in the years and decades after the conquest. Nevertheless, their reports no doubt accurately record the new sole ruler's main incentive for establishing an equestrian governor in Egypt: Emperor Caesar, evidently still in the mindset of the many years of civil war that had just come to an end, took this extraordinary measure because he hoped to prevent the country from becoming the base of a successful rebellion that might threaten Rome and his rule (Jördens 2009, pp. 46–53). For, in his days, even an experienced and high-ranking equestrian official could qualify as “fit for supreme rule” (*capax imperii*; cf. Tacitus, *Annales* 1.13.2; *Historiae* 1.49).

When Germanicus visited Egypt in early January AD 19 without imperial consent, Tiberius reacted nervously (there had been rumors that Germanicus was secretly entertaining aspirations for supreme power) and even publically criticized his adopted son and designated successor before the Senate (Suetonius, *Tiberius* 52; Tacitus, *Annales* 2.59–61; for rumors, see Tacitus, *Annales* 2.43.4, 2.78.1). By then, the importance of Egypt's exports to Rome in grain and taxes must surely have become fully apparent. Thus, Josephus (*Bellum Judaicum* 2.16.4) claims that Rome's annual tax revenues from Judea in AD 66 were less than what Egypt produced for the Roman treasury in a single month, and that Egyptian wheat made up a third of Rome's grain imports (cf. also Velleius Paterculus 2.39.2; *Epitome* 1.6). According to recent estimates based on figures transmitted by ancient historiography, geographical works, and documentary evidence, the revenues from the 25% import tax (*tetarte*) collected at Alexandria probably reached amounts that could have covered the greater part of the regular expenses for the Roman army (for the *maris rubri vectigal*, see Pliny, *Naturalis Historia* 6.24.84; for revenues, McLaughlin 2014, pp. 88–94; Wilson 2015, p. 23; Speidel 2015, pp. 104–105, 2016, p. 294). Rome therefore evidently had a crucial interest in the regular flow and abundant volume of long-distance trade through Egypt, and hence in the security of the land and sea trade routes that connected the Roman Empire with the southern Red Sea and India (e.g. OGIS II 701 = I.Pan du désert 80 (Antinoopolis, AD 137); Cuvigny 2003; Speidel 2016a; for the argument in full, see Speidel 2016, n.d.). As brigands and pirates constantly threatened the transport of immensely profitable goods from Southern Arabia and India, the Roman emperors invested great resources in the protection of the long-distance trade routes through the Red Sea and the Eastern Desert (O.Krok. 41, 60, 87, 88; Pliny, *Naturalis Historia* 6.26.101; Philostratus, *Vita Apollonii* 3.35; Malchus of Philadelphieia (ed. Blockley) 2.404–406). To a significant extent, this shaped the mission of the Roman army in Egypt, which, during the second century, even maintained a base and a prefecture on the Ferrasan islands in the southern Red Sea (AE 2007.1659).

Egypt was the origin of many remarkable products and developments that swept through the Roman Empire, including the dissemination of popular deities like Isis and Sarapis and of romantic notions of a bucolic lifestyle set in Nilotic landscapes. Nonetheless, together with the large-scale organization of grain transports to Rome, the investments in

the security of the long-distance trade routes to a significant extent betrays that the highest importance that Rome attached to Egypt lay with the enormous revenues and exports this extraordinary province provided for the capital and other parts of the empire. To use Mommsen's words (1886, p. 253), the Roman province of Egypt was "the birthplace and the stronghold of the principate."

FURTHER READING

Naphtali Lewis's two important contributions (1970, 1984) no doubt offer the best approach to the subject, but see also Rathbone (1989) and Bagnall (2005). For a more recent, detailed, and well-balanced overview of the debate, see Jördens (2009, pp. 24–58). Rudolf Haensch (2008a, 2008b) discusses important details bearing on the issue, suggesting a more complex view of Egypt's specificity as a Roman province than is currently generally held. For a recent and concise overview of Roman principles and practices of provincial administration and Egypt's position within that framework, see Eck (2016).

CHAPTER THIRTY-EIGHT

New Testament Studies

John S. Kloppenborg

Papyri have played a critical role in the study of the New Testament and early Christianity almost since the time of the first finds in Egypt. Their contributions can be assessed under four headings: Papyri of the New Testament; Other Early Christian Books; Papyri in the Practice of the Exegesis of the New Testament; and Papyri and Early Christian Book- and Letter-Writing.

38.1 Papyri of the New Testament

Up till the 1860s, the major early witnesses to the New Testament were large parchment codices of the fourth century AD, Codex Sinaiticus (Ⲛ) and Codex Vaticanus (B) being the most prominent. By 1868, the first papyrus with portions of 1 Corinthians was published (St. Petersburg, Ross. Nac. Bibl., Gr. 258A), and in the following decades more NT papyri were discovered, including several from Oxyrhynchos (P.Oxy. I 2; II 208, 209; III 402; IV 657). By 1908, 14 papyri were available, now designated with a Gothic **ⲡ** and a successive “Gregory number” as **ⲡ**¹–**ⲡ**¹⁴ (Gregory 1908). None of these, however, represented a complete NT book and none was thought to be earlier than Ⲛ or B, and hence the impact of these discoveries on textual criticism was minimal.

It was not until the publication of the Chester Beatty papyri (Kenyon 1933–1941; Sanders 1935) that the significance of papyri for the practice of textual criticism was realized, since not only did **ⲡ**⁴⁵, **ⲡ**⁴⁶, and **ⲡ**⁴⁷ offer large portions of the four Gospels and Acts, the Pauline letters, and the Apocalypse, respectively, but all three predated the fourth-century parchment codices by almost a century. Over the next 30 years, several other important papyri were published, including ones from the Bodmer collection: **ⲡ**⁶⁶, **ⲡ**⁷², and

℘⁷⁵, all extensive third/fourth-century AD manuscripts containing large portions of Luke, John, 1–2 Peter, and Jude (Martin 1956–1962; Testuz 1959; Martin and Kasser 1961).

As of 2018, 139 papyri representing 137 different manuscripts have been published, preserving portions of every book of the New Testament except 2 Timothy. Once thought to come from the first quarter of the second century, P.Rylands Univ. Libr. Gr. P. 457 (**℘**⁵²) has now been subjected to reexamination that suggests a date much later in that century or even at the beginning of the third (Schmidt 1989; Nongbri 2005; Orsini and Clarysse 2012, p. 462). Several more recently discovered papyri, including P.Oxy. L 3523 (**℘**⁹⁰), P.Oxy. LXIV 4404 (**℘**¹⁰⁴), and P.IFAO inv. 237b (**℘**⁹⁸), now vie for the title of earliest NT papyrus, but they are all dated paleographically on the basis of the same cluster of papyri, with estimates of the dates for the entire cluster ranging from the mid-second century to the early third (Hagedorn 1992; Bagnall 2009a; Orsini and Clarysse 2012). Sensational claims to the effect that **℘**^{64.67} (containing portions of Matthew 3, 5, 26) and several other papyri all date from the first century (Jaroš 2006) have been rejected by most papyrologists, who place them in the late second century at the earliest. O’Callaghan’s (1972) suggestion that 7Q5 – a tiny fragment from Qumran that cannot be later than AD 69 – is a text of Mark has likewise been rejected, partly because the lettering also fits various Septuagint passages and partly because O’Callaghan’s proposal requires the emending of several letters to make it fit Mark 6:52–53.

Papyri finds have been thought to bring our knowledge of the transmission of various NT books earlier than **ℵ** and B, and thus provide a valuable check on the transmission history of the New Testament. **℘**⁷⁵, for example, displays a high degree of agreement in the texts of Luke and John with B a century and a half later. This finding dramatically diminished the appeal of older theories that **ℵ** and B represented a fourth-century recensional text, since **℘**⁷⁵ suggests that the **ℵ** B text already existed around AD 200 (Epp 2013, p. 19). This argument, however, has recently been undermined by the general reconsideration of the dating of NT papyri by Orsini and Clarysse, who have pointed out that NT scholars tend to date NT papyri to the early end of possible dating ranges. Moreover, while Orsini and Clarysse still date **℘**⁷⁵ to AD 200–250, LDAB (2895) now puts it in the fourth century, following Nongbri (2016), who has argued on both paleographical and codicological grounds that a fourth-century date is warranted. In other instances, papyri from the second/third century AD display greater divergences from the **℘**⁷⁵-B cluster. **℘**⁴⁵ (mid-third century AD) represents a textual tradition midway between the **℘**⁷⁵-B cluster and the text type found in the fifth-century Codex Bezae (D). **℘**⁴⁶ displays more agreement with B in the Pauline letters, but has some readings that incline toward the D text. In all, NT papyri before the fourth century display varying levels of agreement with both the **ℵ** B text and the D text, with **℘**⁴⁵ showing affinities in Mark to another textual tradition (earlier called “Caesarean”). No early papyri, however, provide evidence of what was to become the “Majority” or “Byzantine” text that formed the basis for sixteenth-century *textus receptus* (Epp 2007). Early NT papyri, then, give evidence of divergent textual developments in the transmission of the New Testament. Because textual witnesses prior to the late second century are lacking, and some books such as the letter of James have only third-century witnesses, the hope of reconstructing an “Urtext” of any NT book is precluded, but one can identify two or more later “Ausgangstexte” (“initial texts”) that can account for subsequent textual developments.

The scrutiny of early papyri has allowed for the assessment of scribal habits. Royse (2008) examined the “singular readings” – readings not otherwise attested in continuous-text Greek witnesses – of six papyri (P⁴⁵, P⁴⁶, P⁴⁷, P⁶⁶, P⁷², P⁷⁵), evincing, apparently, the habits of individual copyists and “scribally created reading.” By examining scribal reactions to orthographic variations, errors, additions, and omissions, Royse (2008, p. 719) was able to estimate the work of individual scribes, from the “extraordinarily careless scribes of P⁴⁷ and P⁴⁶ ... the careless scribes of P⁷⁵, P⁷², and P⁴⁵ ... to the comparatively careful scribe of P⁶⁶.” Importantly, he concluded, against the prevailing wisdom, that scribes displayed a greater tendency to shorten readings than to lengthen them.

38.2 Other Early Christian Books

Papyri finds have significantly reinforced our knowledge of already-known texts, and added to the repertoire of early Christian literature. Among extant papyri of the Septuagint (LXX), some appear to have been produced by Jewish scribes (e.g. P.Fouad 266b and P.Oxy. L 3522), who substituted the Hebrew tetragrammaton YHWH for *kyrios*; others are likely the work of Christian scribes. As with NT papyri, LXX papyri range from small fragments to substantial portions of Genesis, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Esther, Ecclesiastes, Isaiah, the Minor Prophets, and 2 Maccabees, with 79 papyri and 11 parchments predating the versions of the LXX preserved in $\aleph$ and B (Hurtado 2006, pp. 212–217).

Prominent among papyri of Christian texts that were already known are fragments of the Shepherd of Hermas – 23 in all, dating from second/third to third/fourth century AD; these not only antedate the versions in the fifteenth-century Codex Athous and the partial version preserved in Sinaiticus ($\aleph$), but also demonstrate the popularity of this collection of visions, parables, and precepts. P.Oxy. III 405, a papyrus roll of Irenaeus’ *Adversus haereses* from the second/third century AD, indicates that the text arrived in Egypt from Gaul quite quickly; works of Melito of Sardis are found among the Bodmer (XII, XIII) and Oxyrhynchos groups (P.Oxy. I 5), alongside sundry theological tracts, hymns, prayers, sermons, and exorcistic texts (Hurtado 2006, pp. 224–227).

Of special significance are the discoveries of hitherto unknown non-canonical texts: famously, the first papyrus of the Oxyrhynchos find to be published, P.Oxy. I 1 (and two more in P.Oxy. IV 654, 655) turned out to contain late second- or early third-century AD Greek fragments of the Gospel of Thomas, now known in an almost complete fourth-century Coptic text (Nag Hammadi codex II,2). Fragments of the Gospel of Peter, known from a late sixth-century parchment codex (P.Cair. 10759), were found at Oxyrhynchos as P.Oxy. XLI 2949 (II/III AD) and P.Oxy. LX 4009 (if it is indeed part of the Gospel of Peter) – the latter, according to Bagnall (2009a, p. 13), belonging “more to the early and middle parts of the [second] century than to its latter part.”

P.Lond.Christ (= P.Egerton II), another non-canonical gospel, was once declared the earliest Christian manuscript by its discoverers (Bell and Skeat 1935). Another portion of the same papyrus published as P.Köln VI 255, however, makes it likely that the fragments date from the second or early third century (Gronewald 1987). Other papyrus fragments

of gospel-like materials include M^{PER} N.S. 29 62 (III AD), P.Mert. 51 (III AD), P.Oxy. II 210 (III AD), P.Oxy. X 1224 (III/IV AD), P.Oxy. V 840 (parchment, IV AD), P.Oxy. VIII 1081 (a fragment of the Sophia of Jesus Christ, known also from the Coptic Papyrus Berolinensis 8502 (fifth century) and Nag Hammadi codex III,4 (mid-fourth century)), and P.Ryl. IV 463 and P.Oxy. L 3525 (two copies of the Gospel of Mary, both third-century papyri and earlier witnesses to a fuller Coptic text: Papyrus Berolinensis 8502). The heavily damaged Codex Tchacos (late third century) yielded a few pages of a Coptic Gospel of Judas, probably the translation of a second-century Greek apocryphon. The Acts of Peter appears in a fourth-century papyrus (P.Oxy. VI 849), along with a few other apocryphal texts.

The poor state of preservation of these non-canonical Gospels and Acts is due, presumably, both to efforts to suppress texts associated with heretical movements and to the fact that rejection from the Christian canon consigned them to informal and perhaps private copying – P.Oxy. IV 654 is an opisthograph, probably an indication that the owner could not afford unused papyri. It is worth noting that the texts that would eventually be designated as canonical and those that would become “apocryphal” (Lührmann 2000) were already in circulation at precisely the same time, in the late second and early third centuries AD.

38.3 Papyri in the Practice of the Exegesis of the New Testament

Beyond adding to our knowledge of the textual history of the New Testament, papyri have since almost the beginning of their discovery illuminated the lexicography of early Christian writings. Deissmann (1908) mined them to show that lexemes once thought to belong to “biblical language” were in fact attested in Greco-Egyptian papyri and that the structure and formulae attested in Paul’s letters had significant counterparts in papyrus letters. Moulton and Milligan’s (1930) *Vocabulary of the New Testament* systematically extended Deissmann’s lexicographical insights; a new “Moulton and Milligan” is planned (Horsley and Lee 1997), and the series “New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity” (Horsley 1981–1989; Llewelyn 1992–2002) continues to offer lexical and other observations from newly published papyri and inscriptions that clarify the language and practices assumed in early Christian texts.

Deissmann’s program of employing papyri to illumine both the lexicography of the New Testament and its social, economic, and literary contexts is now being developed in the *Papyrologische Kommentare zum Neuen Testament* (Arzt-Grabner 2003; Arzt-Grabner and Kritzer 2014; Arzt-Grabner et al. 2006; Kreinecker 2010). More focused studies have appeared on the parables of Jesus, employing Greco-Egyptian papyri to contextualize their invocations of viticulture and pastoralism and thus to correct many claims based on ignorance of ancient agricultural practices, estate management, and taxation. For example, contrary to frequent assumptions about the Parable of the Shepherd (Matthew 18:12–14; Luke 15:4–7), a flock of about 100 animals is not excessive, but is near the mean size of flocks reported in tax declarations. And since a

shepherd was only exceptionally the owner of a flock, debates about whether a shepherd with 100 sheep was “rich” or “poor” misunderstand the economics of pastoralism (Kloppenborg and Callon 2010; Kloppenborg 2015). Regarding the Parable of the Tenants (Mark 12:1–12), a careful study of viticulture in Egypt through papyrological documents indicates that absenteeism of the owner was to be expected, and that labor conflict was common, not exceptional (Kloppenborg 2006). Bazzana (2015) demonstrates how much of the language employed in the earliest Jesus movement in Palestine has resonances with the conceptual framework of low-level village administration known especially through the administrative correspondence in Ptolemaic and early Roman Egypt. Scholars of Christian origins are now beginning to make extensive use of Greco-Egyptian papyri in their efforts to describe the social and economic practices presupposed in the literature of the Jesus movement (Last and Rollens 2014; Kloppenborg 2014b; Huebner et al. 2016).

38.4 Papyri and Early Christian Book- and Letter-Writing

The materiality of book and letter production is a final area of recent investigation. Christians appear to have been early adopters of the codex form, preferring this by a significant margin to the bookroll (Roberts and Skeat 1983; Hurtado 2006, chapter 2). The reasons for this preference are unclear, as are the origins of the routine abbreviation of common terms such as κύριος, θεός, πνεῦμα, Ἰησοῦς, and Χριστός – the so-called “nomina sacra” (Tuckett 2003; Hurtado 2006, chapter 3). Attention to the material aspects of manuscripts also helps to identify early copies of such documents as the Apocalypse of John, the Potter’s Oracle, and perhaps other apocalyptic texts, which appear to have been produced unprofessionally and intended for private use only, likely owing to their contents (Bazzana 2016; Cavallo 1994).

All early papyri are written in uncial, but usually in a “reformed documentary hand” (Roberts 1979; Cavallo 2009) rather than the strictly bilinear calligraphic hand found in elite bookrolls (see Orsini and Clarysse 2012 for a classification of graphic types). Elements of documentary hands – *ekthesis* (starting a new line with the projection of the first letter into the margin), *paragrapheoi* (short horizontal lines in the margin), ligatures, medial and high dots, and word spaces – appear in many early papyri, probably pointing both to the level of the scribes (Roberts 1979, p. 14) and to the lectors who were expected to read the texts, who required various “readers’ aids” (Kloppenborg 2014a).

Recent efforts have been devoted to the identification and analysis of letters written by Christians (invariably on papyrus). Features such as crosses, monograms, isopsephisms (words expressed by the value of their letters, e.g. “99” for “amen”), *nomina sacra* (words like *Iesus* written in an abbreviated form, indicating their sacred character), theologically laden formulae (e.g. “the holy and living Trinity be with you”, PSI XIV 1424.8), greeting formulae (e.g. “greetings in the Lord God”, P.Oxy. LVI 3864.4), and onomastic considerations help point to Christian writers, but none can be identified securely before the third century AD (Blumell 2012; Luijendijk 2008; Naldini 1998).

FURTHER READING

Bagnall (2009a) presents a concise, eminently readable account of the dating of early Christian papyri from Egypt, the economics of book production, and the growth of the use of the codex form. Blumell (2012) examines in a brilliant way the criteria used to identify letters penned by Christians, and provides discussions of epistolary networks, the use of scriptural citations and allusions in Christian letters, and identifiably Christian names. Ehrman and Holmes (2013) collect 25 essays by distinguished text-critics of the New Testament. Horsley (1981–1989) and Llewelyn (1992–2002) provide a wonderful collection of papyri and inscriptions that shed light on the linguistic usages and social practices that are reflected in the New Testament and early Christian literature. Hurtado (2006) offers a comprehensive survey of identifiably Christian papyri, and an account of the distinctives of Christian book production.

CHAPTER THIRTY-NINE

New Voices and New Challenges

Rodney Ast

Arguably the two biggest trends in the study of Greco-Roman and Late Antique Egypt over the past several decades have been (i) increased interdisciplinary collaboration and (ii) greater reliance on digital resources. These have fundamentally reshaped both how we understand Antiquity and how we communicate this understanding to others. Chapter 2, “Modern Scholars at Work in a Digital and Multidisciplinary Setting” by Depauw and Dzierzbicka, addresses these points in some detail; Bagnall (2016) has also written recently on the subject. In this concluding piece, I explore some innovative directions that these trends, especially (ii), are taking us in, and some of the challenges they present, particularly in areas of publishing, academic assessment, institutional responsibility, sustainability, and teaching.

39.1 From Digital *Hilfsmittel* to Digital Scholarship

Much has already been written about the numerous digital initiatives aiding scholars of Greco-Roman and Late Antique Egypt (above all, see the detailed survey in Delattre and Heilporn 2014). Increasingly, however, the digital arena has become not just an important tool for scholars, but a platform for conducting research and disseminating ideas. Scholarly debate is now carried out in social media such as blogs, Facebook, and Twitter; in open “sessions” at academia.edu; and on listservs, where the to-and-fro of intellectual exchange gains remarkable immediacy. For example, much discussion about illicit trafficking and the (in)authenticity of antiquities has occurred in these domains, as in the case of the controversial Coptic papyrus that purportedly attests a tradition in which Jesus was married. In two blog posts, “Jesus had a Sister-in-Law” and “The Forgery of

the Lycopolitan Gospel of John,” which were published at *Evangelical Textual Criticism* on April 24 and 27, 2014, Christian Askeland argued that the Gospel of Jesus’ wife papyrus, first published by King (2014), must have been forged by the same person who faked a Gospel of John papyrus, the two having been acquired from a common source (<http://evangelicaltextualcriticism.blogspot.com/2014/04/jesus-had-ugly-sister-in-law.html> and <http://evangelicaltextualcriticism.blogspot.com/2014/04/the-forgery-of-lycopolitan-gospel-of.html>). A subsequent article published in *The Atlantic* unmasks the owner (and possibly forger?) of this papyrus (A. Sabar, “The Unbelievable Tale of Jesus’s Wife.” *The Atlantic* (July–August 2016), <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2016/07/the-unbelievable-tale-of-jesus-wife/485573/>).

Whatever one thinks about the details of the controversy, it is difficult to ignore the fact that the debate has been happening outside the traditional print medium, most notably at the *Evangelical Textual Criticism* blog (all discussions related to the topic are listed in chronological order under the label “Gospel of Jesus’(s) Wife”). In such environments, scholars are able to submit new findings to the scrutiny of peers, who can comment on them directly and immediately. Roberta Mazza’s *Faces and Voices: People, Artifacts, and Ancient History* is a similar site (<https://facesandvoices.wordpress.com>) that has contributed substantially to discussions about the ethics of the antiquities trade. The challenge that the digital medium poses is that it forms a sort of publication gray area: one is often unsure how to cite such discussions, or whether they should be cited at all. Do I really need to engage with an idea, no matter how much evidence is adduced to support it, when it appears among the comments at the end of a blog entry? Moreover, blogposts are usually not discoverable in most library catalogs; probably the best way to find them is to run a search on Google. The indexing and cataloging of non-traditional forums of this sort is a considerable *desideratum*. Other blogs, such as Greg Schwendner’s *What’s New in Papyrology*, have taken on the important task of harvesting posts of interest to their readership (mainly papyrologists), but there should be broader, preferably institutionally supported strategies for preserving online resources in indexed and easily retrievable repositories (cf. also the blogspot AWOL – *The Ancient World Online*, by Charles Jones).

In addition to using online resources to communicate and share research, we have come to expect from online content the same (or even higher) quality as from printed material. We want reliable data. Fifteen years ago, classicists and papyrologists knew that the information they gathered from textual databases such as *Perseus*, the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae*, and the *Duke Databank of Documentary Papyri* (DDBDP) should not be cited in a publication in lieu of standard print editions. As students, we were told always to check the original publications of papyri and not to rely on the DDBDP. Electronic tools served rather as *Hilfsmittel* that permitted one to have quick access to an ancient text or to search large datasets in order to find parallel Greek expressions, attestations of personal names, and so on. The texts, however, could be outdated or contain typos and other inaccuracies that put them below the standards of a principal printed edition. The situation is gradually changing, and digital editions, as well as other kinds of electronic resources, have started to play primary roles. There are texts online that do not exist in traditional print or are superior to existing print editions. As a result, students are now told to check papyri.info for up-to-date information and not necessarily to rely on the printed edition. O.Claud. I 120, a note about a medical matter, offers a good example of a superior digital text (<http://www.papyri.info/ddbdp/o.claud;1;120>). In line 2, Hélène Cuvigny originally understood

σημην as a misspelling of the aorist imperative σήμενον. As more parallels for this type of text became known from another site in the Eastern Desert, Cuvigny realized that it belonged to a group of documents that contain a sort of password allowing the recipient to verify the identity of the sender. These texts begin with the phrase σημεῖον ὅτι, which she decided was what her ostrakon intended. She thus changed the online text accordingly. Of course, online texts are still not flawless (far from it), yet the tendency to accept them uncritically has increased, pointing up the need to implement quality-control measures not only on incoming data, but also across already existing content.

To illustrate the more central place digital resources have assumed in scholarship, I will discuss in some detail the open-access consortium of papyrological projects hosted at papyri.info. This site contains tens of thousands of transcriptions of ancient Greek documentary papyri mainly from Greco-Roman Egypt, plus a smaller number of Latin, Coptic, and (since just recently) Arabic texts. There is an extensive bibliography and thousands of translations, mainly English but also German, French, and Italian, and many texts are accompanied by digital images. Since 2010, thanks to the efforts of Joshua Sosin and others, papyri.info has increasingly been used as a tool for curating the texts that it hosts: scholars can not only use it to submit emendation proposals, but can even create full editions of previously unpublished papyri (Sosin 2010). And they do this in a traditional, peer-reviewed publication environment. A good example of a born-digital publication is L. Berkes, “A Wife in Prison: A Letter from 7th Century Fayum” (<http://papyri.info/ddbdp/ddbdp;2015;3>). It includes an introduction, transcription, apparatus, line-by-line commentary, image, and English translation – in effect, all the components that one would expect to find in a first edition. Here, however, online publication is more than just online distribution of PDF files: the content of the article is itself open to revision, since any person can expand on or emend it, all within the same peer-reviewed environment. Moreover, all changes are attributed by the system to the person responsible for submitting them (further examples are R. Ast and L. Berkes, “A Letter from Athanasios the Scholastikos Mentioning Constantinople,” <http://papyri.info/ddbdp/ddbdp;2015;1> and A. Bernini, “A Requisition of Workmen and Donkeys,” <http://papyri.info/ddbdp/ddbdp;2015;2>).

As anyone who has dealt with ancient papyri knows, textual problems are rarely completely solved in a first edition, later corrections are not always correct, and – as has been the case for decades – subsequent observers improve readings in an iterative process. Dieter Hagedorn perfected the art of the textual emendation in his masterly series of *Bemerkungen*, which he published, mainly in the *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*, over the course of his career in Heidelberg (bibliography can be found in the journal’s online indices). Traditionally, these types of emendations would eventually be picked up first by the *Berichtigungsliste der griechischen Papyrusurkunden aus Ägypten* (BL since 1913) and ultimately by the DDbDP. Now, however, one can propose emendations directly to the online text. In fact, since the inception of papyri.info, Hagedorn himself has contributed over 100 new readings to documentary papyri.

One advantage of this publication strategy is that it permits speedy dissemination of knowledge without reliance on cumbersome and often redundant print procedures, and with no diminution of quality. Still, online publishing often has negative connotations, possibly because of an association with lax editorial controls, careless scholarship, and

unstable content – we all know the frustration of clicking on a dead link! There is no inherent reason why this medium should be unreliable, however. With papyri.info, publications undergo at least the same vetting as any print publication, if not more: all submissions are approved by members of an expert editorial board, who are themselves supported by a panel of senior editors. From a methodological standpoint, there is little difference between how one edits online and on paper. In fact, the precepts of good editorial practice set out by Herbert Youtie in his seminal 1963 article, “The Papyrologist: Artificer of Fact,” are as valid today as they were then. The vehicle, if you will, for intellectual exchange is all that is different, and in many ways it is now truer to the dynamic spirit of academic discourse than was the traditional publication process. As for disappearing links, as soon as we show our digital repositories the same sort of care we do our library holdings, and as long as domain holders consider the impact that changes to their URIs have on users, we will go a long way toward ensuring persistent access to online material.

At present, papyri.info has only limited usefulness as a publication venue. It is not possible, for example, to publish corpora of related texts together under the banner of a general introduction. Each text, in effect, stands alone. What is needed is a publication platform that allows one to create editions of multiple texts or even synthetic studies of themes, authors, historical periods, and so forth. One can imagine, for instance, an online journal concerned with Greco-Roman Egypt that offers an editorial platform in which full articles can be composed, vetted, revised, and published. Not only that, but the journal could also act as a feeder, so to speak, that makes XML texts available to papyri.info and permits the Trismegistos online database (<http://trismegistos.org>) to harvest data that it is interested in, such as that concerning places and people. The details would have to be worked out (the system would presumably depend on wider use of Linked Open Data), but the point is that doing scholarship in an integrated, interactive digital environment offers considerable advantages. First, it would improve the quality of the resources involved. Second, it would reduce some of the redundancies in the current publication model, which sees printed texts eventually digitized. Finally, because of its open-access nature, it would expand the reach of scholarship to people who do not have access to specialist libraries.

But a word of caution: as more people come to rely on digital resources for study and research, there is an increased need for user-friendliness. This has been observed in the context of related projects, such as the Text Encoding Initiative (TEI). There is some truth in a colleague’s complaint that initiatives such as papyri.info can seem like private clubs open only to the initiated. Hearing from less tech-savvy colleagues about optimizing user experience can benefit projects considerably. All of this, however, imposes financial and institutional demands, a topic that I return to below.

In addition to innovation in the area of text publication, there is also a significant need for better handling of visual material. Despite an exponential increase over the past 20 years in the number of images of artifacts from Egypt available online, thanks to projects such as the Advanced Papyrological Information System (APIS) and the electronic catalogs of Florence, Oxford, and Berlin papyri, visual material is more poorly managed and less exploited than textual data. Existing resources, such as papyri.info, trismegistos.org, and others, do not allow one easily to upload, store, and work with images of ancient artifacts. While websites such as pappal.info, which gathers images of thousands of dated

Greek documents, can be a useful paleographical guide, they still do not replace manuals written by scholars with experience in paleography. Paleographers have been slow to take their craft online.

One reason for the lag in developing tools to handle visual material has perhaps been caution over copyright. Users have not wanted to infringe it, and collections have sometimes hidden behind it. This is unfortunate, because initiatives that focus not on texts (at least, not exclusively), but on the ancient object have the potential to revolutionize how we study and teach paleography, art history, and archeology (the Anagnosis project at the University of Würzburg has made steps in this direction). The field of papyrology, which has for the most part been quite generous in its distribution of digital images, has shown that easy access to visual content can actually generate more interest in collections. While most museums, libraries, and departments have restricted this access to published material, some have opened up their unpublished holdings as well, offering high-resolution images of unpublished texts. For example, Duke University permits anyone to work on papyri in its collection without formal permission. This has given students and scholars the opportunity to publish texts that they otherwise would not have been able to get at. It is true that greater accessibility has sometimes led to people unknowingly working on the same material simultaneously, something that can seem like an unnecessary duplication of effort. But these conflicts have been few. Nor are they necessarily bad: multiple voices commenting on the same material can be mutually beneficial. On the whole, the net benefit of open access seems to outweigh any disadvantages.

39.2 Giving Credit Where Credit is Due

Another challenge that presents itself in the context of scholarly publishing is in academic assessment. One reason that scholars give, particularly in Europe, for not publishing online is that such publications are not assessed the same way that print publications are. Tenure committees and other university organs tasked with evaluating scholarly performance prefer print publications, because they can be more easily quantified, for example by numbers of pages. A colleague once told me that his departmental chair instructed him to prepare for his tenure review by printing out all that he ever wrote, “The higher the pile, the better.” Online publications are not subject to the same measure; they cannot be stacked as easily. If the tenure procedure is partly a gauge of the impact that one has had on one’s field, how then does one evaluate the impact of a serious and engaging blog? Or of online emendations to Greek documentary papyri? In a way, new methods challenge committees to look more closely at what people are saying, to read the blog posts and surrounding discussions, to experiment with the online tools. A digital project may ultimately contribute more to a field than a monograph at a prestigious press.

A similar problem exists with collaborative work. In collaborative projects, whether co-authored monographs or articles, the process of assessment must be handled differently from that of single-author publications: a matrix is needed for apportioning credit. This can be difficult when university policy does not permit multi-authored works to count toward the research needed for further qualification, such as doctoral degrees and habilitations. As Depauw and Dzierzbicka (Chapter 2) demonstrate, collaboration is

increasingly common in Ancient Studies, and it can be very effective at giving more nuanced perspectives on the ancient world. Its value should not be undermined by our inability (or unwillingness) to credit individual participants.

39.3 Research at the Center

The two disciplines that have perhaps most shaped our understanding of Greco-Roman and Late Antique Egypt over the past several decades are archeology and papyrology. Ongoing work in these areas has given us new insights and troves of fresh evidence. The disciplines themselves, especially papyrology, have been supported primarily by research centers, university departments, and libraries that have amassed significant print resources and, in many cases, large papyrus collections – not to mention expert faculty members. As many of the discipline’s resources (e.g. articles, monographs, texts) have gradually pervaded the digital sphere and access to them has widened, so papyrological centers have, quite reasonably, assumed greater responsibility for developing and maintaining these digital assets. The places that have taught generations of young students and spent years building substantial collections of books are the natural homes for a discipline’s core electronic projects (KU Leuven University, Duke University, and the University of Heidelberg are good examples of traditional centers that now contribute to the maintenance of some of the discipline’s central electronic resources). Other institutions, with similar intellectual and library resources, should do the same if they want to remain viable. While the twentieth century was a century of collecting, the twenty-first is poised to be one of disseminating and of digital curation.

39.4 Putting Your Money Where Your Projects Are

Realizing a medial shift from print to digital publication requires an investment of time and money. One of the great advantages of most digital tools in Ancient Studies is that they are frequently open-access. Yet, the fact that they are free to use does not mean that they are created, disseminated, and maintained for free. Development and regular maintenance require time and labor. Papyri.info was founded on the principle that the very scholars who use it will be the ones who maintain it. This concept of community involvement has in many ways proved effective, but there is still a pressing need for financial resources to maintain the integrity and quality of the projects. Community-based initiatives require oversight: there are inevitable glitches in the system, omissions of content, and other problems that require attention. The community, too, requires instruction and guidance if it is to be expected to give support. In effect, we need a Janus-type figure, someone poised with one face toward the user community, and the other monitoring the technical infrastructure. And this, of course, requires money. For this reason, it seems imperative that we invest in our core projects. Short-term grants, however welcome they are, will not cover long-term operational costs. Institutions, professional societies, and even individual scholars and students should assume common responsibility for the well-being of their online resources (similar appeals have been issued recently by others involved

with digital initiatives that depend significantly on volunteer labor; M. Mueller, “Whither TEI? The Next Thirty Years.” *Scalable Reading* (September 20, 2016), <https://scalablereading.northwestern.edu/?p=477>; C. Ando, R. Hamilton, C. MacKay, and J. O’Donnell, “Letter from the Editors.” *BMCR* (October 14, 2016), <http://www.bmcreview.org/2016/10/20161024.html>). Annual dues, especially at the institutional level, could perhaps be part of the solution. We are accustomed to paying for books and journals; we should be equally willing to contribute to digital platforms, which in many cases we consult more frequently.

39.5 Engaging the Next Generation

Just as digital projects have transformed research and publishing, so too have they influenced teaching methods. In conclusion, I will consider some ways in which the Internet presents itself as an effective global classroom. Web-based teaching is particularly suited to specialized disciplines such as papyrology, epigraphy, numismatics, and paleography. For one thing, there is enough visual and primary source material online that an instructor does not need to spend large amounts of time scanning and uploading it. It is therefore quite easy to gather and present the material that one wants to discuss. Second, there are enough conferencing tools available that an instructor can create a fairly sophisticated classroom, complete with screen-sharing capabilities, whiteboards, and so on: all that one needs for detailed, hands-on study of ancient artifacts – except that these objects (and this is a significant trade-off) never actually touch the students’ hands. With this technology, instructors can reach students in remote places who would not otherwise have the opportunity to take classes in these disciplines. A further benefit of online teaching is that it allows instructors to use the classroom to improve the very resources that they depend on for research and teaching. Any class that deals with documentary texts available at papyri.info can simultaneously improve the very content that it studies. Of course, one does not necessarily need an online course for this kind of teaching. Electronic resources can be used and improved in a traditional classroom as well. But most institutions do not have the capacity to offer such classes. Again, it is the specialist research centers that can and should take charge here.

In the end, innovation in teaching and research is all about improving and communicating our understanding of the important place of Greco-Roman and Late Antique Egypt within the broader context of ancient society and culture. Through collaboration and the lively exchange of ideas, we can capture the richness of the period and place, and with our digital tools we can share these ideas and curate our evidence more effectively. Ultimately, however, the success of our electronic tools will depend on three things: the quality of their content, the ease of their use, and the personal and institutional responsibility we assume for their ongoing maintenance.

Digital Resources and Bibliography

Digital Resources

- Academia.edu. Social network website where academics can share papers, etc. www.academia.edu.
- ADS. Archeology Data Service, providing high-quality and dependable digital resources. <http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk>.
- Amheida. Database for the excavations at Amheida, also Amheida publications and preliminary reports. www.amheida.org; www.amheida.net.
- Anagnosis Project. Part of the Kallimachos Project. Combines data from two sources. Texts stored in Digital Corpus of Literary Papyri (DCLP) and images of papyri provided by various collections. <http://www.kallimachos.de/kallimachos/index.php/Anagnosis>.
- APD. The Arabic Papyrology Database, full text and metadata. <http://www.apd.gwi.uni-muenchen.de:8080/apd/project.jsp>.
- APIS. Advanced Papyrological Information System, now integrated in papyri.info. <http://www.papyri.info/browse/apis>.
- ARIADNE. Integrates existing archeological research data infrastructures. www.ariadne-infrastructure.eu.
- AWOL. The Ancient World Online, blogspot by Charles E. Jones. <http://ancientworldonline.blogspot.com>.
- Berners-Lee. Tim, Linked Data. <https://www.w3.org/DesignIssues/LinkedData.html>.
- BIPAb. La Banque des Images des Papyrus de l'Aphrodité byzantine. http://www.misha.fr/papyrus_bipab.

- Catalogue of the Egyptian Museum and Papyrus Collection in Berlin. <https://berlpap.smb.museum/>.
- Catalogue of the Oxyrhynchus Papyri in Oxford. Guide and online database. <http://www.papyrology.ox.ac.uk/POxy>.
- Cedopal. Centre de Documentation de Papyrologie Littéraire website. <http://web.philo.ulg.ac.be/cedopal>.
- Centre Alexandrin d'Étude des Amphores online. www.amphoralex.org.
- Checklist of Editions of Greek, Latin, Demotic, and Coptic Papyri, Ostraca, and Tablets. <http://www.papyri.info/docs/checklist>.
- DCLP. Digital Corpus of Literary Papyri. www.litpap.info.
- DDbDP. The Duke Databank of Documentary Papyri. An electronic corpus of published Greek and Latin documents written on papyrus, ostraca, or wooden tablets. Available via papyri.info.
- Duke University papyrus collection. Provides electronic access to texts about and images of nearly 1400 papyri from Ancient Egypt. <http://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/scriptorium/papyrus>.
- HGV. Heidelberger Gesamtverzeichnis der griechischen Papyrusurkunden Ägyptens. <http://aquila.zaw.uni-heidelberg.de>.
- JSTOR. Digital library allowing full-text searches. www.jstor.org.
- LAWDI. Linked Ancient World Data Institute/Initiative. https://wiki.digitalclassicist.org/Linked_Ancient_World_Data_Institute.
- LDAB. Leuven Database of Ancient Books. <http://www.trismegistos.org/ldab>.
- The Nag Hammadi Library. <http://www.gnosis.org/naghamm/nhlalpha.html>.
- Nubian Monasteries Project. <http://www.nubianmonasteries.uw.edu.pl>.
- OCHRE. Facilitates the use of the Online Cultural and Historical Research Environment to record, integrate, analyze, publish, and preserve cultural and historical information in all of its digital forms. <https://ochre.uchicago.edu>.
- OEB. Online Egyptological Bibliography. <http://oeb.griffith.ox.ac.uk>.
- ORBIS. The Stanford Geospatial Network Model of the Roman World, reconstructing the time cost and financial expense associated with a wide range of different types of travel in Antiquity. <http://orbis.stanford.edu>.
- PapPal. Facilitates the study of ancient writing by collecting images of dated papyri. www.pappal.info.
- Papy-L. Email discussion list for papyrologists and scholars of Greco-Roman Egypt.
- Papyri.info. The website has two primary components. The Papyrological Navigator (PN) supports searching, browsing, and aggregation of ancient papyrological documents and related materials. The Papyrological Editor (PE) enables multi-author, version-controlled, peer-reviewed scholarly curation of papyrological texts, translations, commentary, scholarly metadata, institutional catalogue records, bibliography, and images. <http://papyri.info>.
- PE. See Papyri.info.
- Pelagios. Provides online resources and a community forum for using open data methods to link and explore historical places. <http://commons.pelagios.org>.
- Pleiades. Allows the use, creation, and sharing of historical geographic information about the ancient world in digital form. <http://pleiades.stoa.org/home>.

- PN. See Papyri.info.
- PSI. Digital catalogue of Papiri della Società Italiana (PSI) and of Papiri della Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana (P.Laur.). <http://www.psi-online.it>.
- ResearchGate. www.researchgate.net.
- Seals and Stamps from Graeco-Roman and Byzantine Egypt. <http://www.trismegistos.org/seals>.
- SNAP. Standards for Networking Ancient Prosopographies.
- Synallagma. Greek Contracts in Context. Computerized databank providing electronic access to legal documents from Hellenistic, Roman, and Byzantine times, mostly from Egypt. <http://synallagma.tau.ac.il/>.
- Text Leiden+ Documentation. http://papyri.info/editor/documentation?docotype=text;http://papyri.info/docs/leiden_plus.
- Thesaurus Linguae Aegyptiae. Digital corpus of Egyptian (including Demotic) texts. <http://aaew.bbaw.de/tla/index.html>.
- TLG. Thesaurus Linguae Graecae. A digital library of Greek literature. <http://stephanus.tlg.uci.edu>.
- TLG 1988. Thesaurus Linguae Graecae, CD ROM (TLG C), see <http://www.tlg.uci.edu/about/history.php>.
- TM. Trismegistos: an Interdisciplinary Portal of Papyrological and Epigraphical Resources. <http://www.trismegistos.org>.
 - TM Arch. Database and descriptions of papyrus archives in Greco-Roman Egypt. <http://www.trismegistos.org/arch/index.php>.
 - TM Demotistische Literaturübersicht. <http://www.trismegistos.org/dl/index.php>.
 - TM Fayum. A gazetteer of the Fayum Area. <http://www.trismegistos.org/fayum>.
 - TM Geo. A database of places related to the ancient world. <http://www.trismegistos.org/geo/index.php>.
 - TM People. Database of names and people attested in Egypt. <http://www.trismegistos.org/ref/index.php>.
- UK Research Council online. www.ukri.org.
- Vindolanda Tablets. <http://vindolanda.csad.ox.ac.uk>.
- What's New in Papyrology: Recent Publications of Papyri & Ostraca 4th BC–8th AD; Conferences, Lectures etc. from Papy-L and Other Sources as Noted. <http://papyrology.blogspot.com>.
- Würzburg database of ritual scenes. <http://www.serat.aegyptologie.uni-wuerzburg.de>.
- Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik. <https://www.jstor.org/journal/zeitpapyepig>.

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